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From my dear daughter
E. G. Gan
On my 75th year.
1874
a very uninteresting book on a very
interesting man

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CHARLES LAMB.

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New York:
ALDINE, WELLFORD, AND ARMSTRONG
1874.

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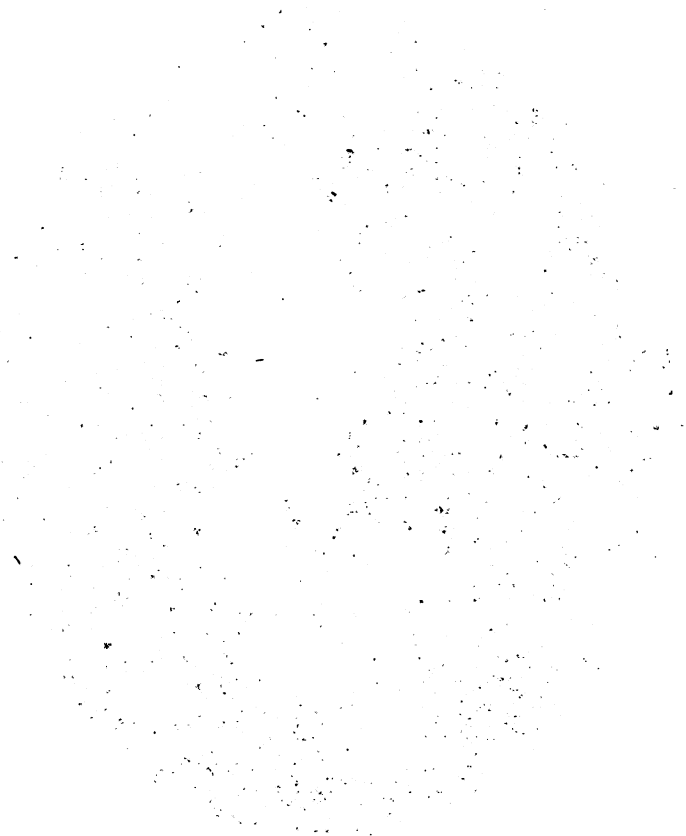

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# MARY AND CHARLES LAMB:

## POEMS, LETTERS,

AND

## REMAINS:

*NOW FIRST COLLECTED, WITH REMINISCENCES AND NOTES.*

By W. CAREW HAZLITT.

*With Portrait, and numerous Facsimiles and Illustrations of their Favourite Haunts in London and the Suburbs.*

New York:
SCRIBNER, WELFORD, AND ARMSTRONG.
1874.

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7, Little Queen Street.

Lamb's House at Enfield.

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# MARY AND CHARLES LAMB.

## INTRODUCTION.

IN the closing years of the eighteenth century, a small English family, in very humble circumstances, was occupying rooms at No. 7 Little Queen Street, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.* The circle was composed of an old man and his wife, their two children (a brother and sister), and these children's aunt on the mother's side—a maiden lady already advanced in years.

There was another son, who held some responsible position in the South-Sea House; but he, though a bachelor, lived apart. He was a person of rather peculiar disposition. The intercourse between him and his relatives was comparatively limited.

The old man himself had formerly been clerk to one of the benchers of the Inner Temple, and had retired on a slender annuity. The son whom he had living with him under the same roof was, like his elder brother John, on the South-Sea establishment. John, it appears, had had it in his power to place him there. If we are not mistaken, this was nearly the only obligation under which the family ever lay to John.

* The site is at present (1868) occupied by Trinity Church, which has absorbed Nos. 6, 7, and 8. What tender memories were swept away to make room for what is popularly called *an improvement!*



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The insignificant salary which the younger son derived from his labours at the South-Sea House was what, with his father's trifling allowance, supported for some years the entire household. There was about 100*l.* a year altogether; yet they lived, these five, in some fashion, and bore their lot patiently.

It was a mere youth who formed their main stay. He had been educated at Christ's Hospital, which he entered when he was seven, and quitted when he was between fourteen and fifteen. He had the happiness to form, during his continuance upon that noble foundation, a few life-friendships; but it was his special good fortune to form one which was indescribably precious.

About two years subsequently to their removal from a previous residence in the Temple to Little Queen Street, the youth, to whom the family looked for their maintenance, managed to get sufficient influence exerted in his behalf* to procure his transfer from the South-Sea House to the service of the East-India Company, in Leadenhall Street. Personally, he lost whatever moral support and companionship his brother's presence under the same roof might have been to him; but the prospect became brighter for them all. Very slight benefit accrued at first, perhaps; but a few pounds a year formed a rather important consideration, in these days, in the eyes of the members of the small, obscure home, in the neighbourhood of Holborn.

* In the "Essay on Modern Gallantry," there is the following passage: "Joseph Paice, of Bread-Street Hill, merchant, and one of the directors of the South-Sea Company—the same to whom Edwards, the Shakespeare commentator, has addressed a fine sonnet—was the only pattern of consistent gallantry I have met with. He took me under his shelter at an early age, and bestowed some pains upon me. I owe to his precepts and example whatever there is of the man of business (and that is not much) in my composition. It was not his fault that I did not profit more."

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They lived much to themselves, content if the means were at hand of supplying their day-to-day wants. The old people were gradually sinking into dotage. The daughter worked at her needle, and had an apprentice bound to her; but her earnings probably added little to their resources. They saw no society, and friends were few.

It must have been with no common sense of loneliness that the young clerk passed to and from the dreary building in Leadenhall Street, through the bustling thoroughfares,—observing, but not observed. At one end of his daily journey there was a home, which was only a home in name; at the other, there was drudgery, only made sufferable by the feeling of how much depended on his labour—only sweetened by the load which rested on his individual shoulders, too young yet to be so overweighted.

Here is the story in outline of the very early years of Charles and Mary Ann Lamb.* In the present little undertaking, there is no pretence to an elaborate delineation and portraiture of the lives of these two, but merely an attempt to bring forward some neglected particulars in them, and to gather up into a sheaf all that still remained uncollected of Elia's writing.

To glean after the gleaners, to take a last turn round the stubble, in the hope that, by using our eyes uncommonly well, we may fall in with just enough to make up a small sheaf, is a doubtful kind of business to enter upon; but, at the same time, it is one of those tasks from which, if we can emerge at all creditably, we are

* There had been another sister, but she died in infancy. Miss Lamb, in a letter to Mrs. Cowden Clarke of 1820, elsewhere printed *in extenso*, speaks of her thus: "Together with the recollections of your dear baby, *the image of a little sister I once had* comes as fresh into my mind as if I had seen her as lately," &c. See *infrà*, pp. 89-91.

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apt, rightly or wrongly, to think rather better of our capabilities than we did before.

This is always more particularly the case, of course, where our predecessors were no laggards, but smart hands, good men and true, persons of mark and likelihood. This is the position in which I cannot help feeling that I am, to a certain extent, placed in regard to the enterprise before me. But there were one or two other considerations which influenced me in determining to proceed with it.

The life of Lamb is a subject which many have attempted, and in which no one, as it seems to me, has been very happy. We do not get at the man in any of these pen-and-ink paintings; and that is precisely what we should wish to get at. They are as unsatisfactory as his portraits, which are all unlike one another, and none of them very like the original.

All that has been done hitherto in this direction has helped, more or less, to swell the stock of materials, with which somebody hereafter will have to do his best. We must be thankful to Barry Cornwall for his Recollections; and the late Mr. Justice Talfourd laid the world under obligations, to a certain extent, by the Memorials which he gave to it of his friend. But neither of these books realises our conception of what a Life of Lamb ought to be. Miss Lamb, in an unpublished letter to a correspondent, speaks of their—hers and her brother's—*what-we-do* existence. There is want of a volume yet which should describe that for us, which should paint the Lambs' fireside, and present to us a view, or even glimpses, of those two, as they were and moved, even at the hazard of a little pre-Raphaelitish detail.

The Lambs, I apprehend, were not genteel people, in the severely conventional acceptation of the term;

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and it is to be added, that the times in which they lived were, unhappily for them, or happily for us, not quite such genteel times as we find ourselves cast in. This delightful and accomplished couple had not only poor and humble antecedents, but at the outset, and for some long while after, their own circumstances were poor and humble; and there were certain old-world notions, archaic ways, in which they were born; and with these they grew up and died.

There seems to be less necessity for attempting to present Lamb to ourselves and to our posterity in an inexact light,—in other words, for holding him up to have been something which he was not,—while we, in common with all comers after us, possess *Elia* and those inimitable Letters, to display to our view so unmistakably the true manner of man this was.

All that is needed for his Biography, not to add his Monument, is an edition of the Essays and Correspondence, with just so many notes as are necessary in strictness to explain allusions and passages which time has obscured, or is obscuring. One scarcely likes to think what he himself would have felt about such a publication; but it is the inevitable penalty upon authors who are durable enough to have in the fulness of time editors and scholiasts.

It is certainly unfortunate that there should have been a want of entire cordiality between Lamb and both his biographers. It would be useless to contend that he enjoyed the complete or unreserved sympathy either of Talfourd* or of Mr. Procter. His genius

* "I may, perhaps, be allowed the opportunity of stating, that an edition of such of the late Mr. Charles Lamb's writings as can be recovered by his executors, with a large selection from his correspondence, is now preparing, under the superintendence of *Mr. Sergeant Talfourd, M.P.*; and will be accompanied by a notice, from that learned

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and temperament were wholly different from theirs; he was cast in quite a different mould; his beginning, progress, and fortune in life had no point of affinity with their beginnings, progress, and fortune in life; there was absolutely nothing in common between them, beyond the fact that they were members of the same literary brotherhood—*longo intervallo*. Even while he lived, Lamb represented almost an extinct type: his social tastes and sympathies were chiefly with the generation which had passed away before he met Talfourd or Procter,—as his writings belong to us in a larger sense than they can be said to have belonged to his contemporaries. His heart was only half with an age which scarcely so much as half understood him. He was very possibly more than semi-serious when he once said, in a letter to a friend: "Hang the age! I will write for posterity!"

The almost irreparable injury which Talfourd, by his peculiar ideas of friendship and editorial responsibility, has inflicted on the writings of Lamb, may seem to put out of sight any small peccadilloes on the part of Mr. Procter and others; and yet an apology may be made for Talfourd which can never be offered for his successor, namely, that the former committed to the press what he had to say, and what remains of his friend he had collected, while several persons were surviving, whose names were introduced into some portions of the correspondence in a manner, and under circumstances, rendering unreserved publication at that time inexpedient. In 1866, when Barry Cornwall issued his biography, no such plea for extenuating—or rather, to speak to the point, misrepresenting—several features in Lamb's character and life, was at all susceptible of being urged. A course

and accomplished gentleman, of the Life and Genius of his departed friend."—*New Monthly Magazine*, Feb. 1835.

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of policy questionable enough in 1848—but, I am ready to grant, pardonable then on grounds of delicacy —became, in almost twenty years, a course equally destitute of meaning and justification; and it must be added that, supposing an election made, literary falsification, by which I mean the garbling of letters, is a rather more venial sin than moral falsification, by which I intend the distortion of biographical facts. Truly, if Lamb could have foreseen the strange work which his commentators (of the old school) were to make of his productions and of himself, and the liberties which his so-called editors were to take, not merely with the letter, but often with the spirit, of his unique correspondence, those "waste wrappers of foolscap," which "took the impression so kindly" of sonnets, odes, and what not else, would have been left to lie till John Company's charwoman swept them before her besom into the dust; or, like Prospero, he would have "broken his staff, and buried it certain fathoms in the earth." It was not as if these gentlemen had failed to comprehend and appreciate the great and rare mind with which two of them, at least, had the advantage of coming into direct contact; the mischief was done by a desire to present Lamb before a generation, which had not known him as they knew him, in a light which was not a true one; and, for this purpose, they did not scruple to tamper with the man's correspondence, and to put a figure of wax of their own fashioning in the place of the real flesh and blood. Lamb was deranged once or twice in the course of his life; but this was to be glossed over at any cost. Lamb partook freely of beer and spirits; but this was to be flatly contradicted. Lamb used strong expletives; but this was not to be allowed to appear any where. What was the object? it may be inquired. Perhaps, reverence for the memory of Lamb? Was it not, rather, half-hearted-

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ness, egotism, effeminate prudery? Was it not a solicitude to exhibit the man in as elegant an aspect as might be, for fear the world should be scandalised at the notion of gentlemen of position associating on intimate terms with *a person* who quaffed porter out of a pewter-pot, and interlarded his discourse with profane expressions?

I shall abstain from occupying space uselessly by repeating anecdotes and other details in which I have been anticipated; and I do not feel it necessary to transfer to these pages any casual allusions to the Lambs, or any incidental elucidations of their checkered history, which I may have introduced elsewhere.* But I shall have occasion to bring forward,—for the sake of modification, and even of attempted disproof,—here and there, certain statements or speculations which have appeared in other places. This I could not help considering as part of my business. How far I have succeeded in any case, it is reserved for the public to decide.

There are some notices of Lamb in Leigh Hunt's *London Journal*. One is a sketch by the editor; another consists of Mr. Moxon's recollections; and many pages are occupied by a narrative, based on personal intimacy, from a third pen. I observe, too, at page 348 of the second volume, a saying or two which should not be lost sight of.

Mr. Patmore's Reminiscences† are also deserving of a perusal; and the same may be said of Mr. Allsop's *Recollections of S. T. Coleridge.*

In the tenth volume of the third series of *Notes and Queries*, again, there is an interesting paper on the subject of Lamb, from the pen of Mr. Thomas West-

* *Memoirs of William Hazlitt; with Portions of his Correspondence.* 1867, 2 vols. 8vo.

† *My Friends and Acquaintances.* 1854, 3 vols. 8vo.

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wood. All these sources have been exhausted, and have proved more or less informing and suggestive.

The late Mr. J. B. Pulham possessed two curious and highly valuable volumes, sold after his decease, containing portions of Mr. Gutch's Bristol reprint of George Wither's works, interleaved with large quarto paper. Upon these blank sheets Mr. Gutch himself, Dr. Nott, and, I believe, Mr. Pulham, in a few instances, wrote comments illustrative of the old poet, extending to considerable length; and to those comments Charles Lamb, to whom the volumes were forwarded by Gutch, added comments upon comments, or remarks upon remarks.* Of those, some were very severe; and Lamb in several places puns at Dr. Nott's expense, and passes upon that gentleman rather rigorous strictures. The two volumes are a great curiosity; but their history would be rather obscure if it were not elucidated by a letter from Lamb to Gutch, which was first printed in Mr. Gutch's *Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode* (1847), and which will be given by and by, with one or two other letters from Lamb to Gutch.

The pencil-jottings in the interleaved Wither formed the *prima stamina* of the article "On the Poetical Works of George Wither," in the common editions of Lamb's works, but with a difference!

It may be inquired, after all, why a regular Life of Lamb was not entered upon in this case. But the feeling, as regarded such an undertaking (if it had been otherwise feasible), was, that the ground was to a certain extent preoccupied, and that constant repetition of what has been said and resaid would have formed a necessary

* I gather, from a citation of one of these in the *Edinburgh Review* for July 1866, that the writer of the article "Charles Lamb" in that number had access to the volumes. They are now, I believe, in the possession of A. C. Swinburne, Esq.

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portion of the enlarged plan. To this sort of thing I, for my part, had an instinctive dislike; and I accordingly resolved to make it a mere book of gleanings and notes.

As the writer of a portion of the following pages, I desire to have my purpose distinctly understood. To relate the life of Charles Lamb is beside my immediate object—even, I may say, beyond my immediate ambition. I do not deal here with dates and circumstances which should be familiar to most people. My intention is to give a new prominence to certain facts not, at least, generally known; and to commit to paper a few speculations which, if of any value, may serve their turn, and, if of none, will soon be forgotten.

The sectional character of the present volume is obviously disadvantageous to its symmetry and unity; but the fact is, that it was never expected that the "New Illustrations" would have extended to the dimensions which they now assume. The book has been on the anvil for a considerable time, and—*crevit eundo*. In some respects the delay has been an undoubted gain; but the homogeneity of the publication has suffered from the (originally unintended) prominence given to the Second Part, and its increase to an equality in bulk with the Lamb-Stoddart Correspondence. As a necessary consequence, the same ground has been occasionally traversed more than once, and repetitions will be here and there detected. This fault might have been easily avoided, if the exact nature and extent of my plan had been known to me beforehand; but the book, as I have said, is emphatically a book of waifs and strays.

I had intended to prefix a motto; and it was to be those words of Coleridge: "Nothing ever left a stain on that gentle creature's mind, which looked upon the degraded men and things around him like moonshine

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on a dunghill, which shines and takes no pollution."* But, on reconsideration, the sentence seemed un-motto-ish; for a motto to a book, like the porch to a house, should be fragrant,—and Coleridge's simile, whatever else it might be, was not that.

I must not, I think, close these introductory remarks without reverting to a subject which I have some delicacy in approaching. Since the sheets of the present volume were worked off, the first instalment has appeared of the long-promised new edition of Charles Lamb's Works and Letters.† To that Edition I supplied *gratuitously*, and quite apart from my contract with the publishers for the mere editorship of the Works of Lamb, a tolerably large body of notes, and many letters from originals in my own hands, or in the possession of personal friends. The fact is, that the publishers asked for no notes, and only contemplated a reissue of the Letters, &c., with such corrections and additions as were derivable from material belonging to them; and these were duly utilised by me in accordance with the terms of our agreement. Subsequently,—as I was informed through the columns of a paper in language which is below criticism,—it appeared to the publishers imperative to cancel my work, and to place the editorship in more competent hands: so it was stated and understood.‡ The plain truth is, however, that my notes, collations, arrangement, every thing, have been retained (with the exception that I had distinguished between Justice Talfourd's few notes and

* Coleridge, however, has been anticipated by L. Sherling (Daniel Pratt), in his *Life of St. Agnes* (1677, p. 89), where the author (very probably himself a copyist) puts into the mouth of the saint the allocution to God: "Thou that mak'st the Sun shine on a Dunghill without defiling it," &c.

† *The Complete Correspondence and Works of Charles Lamb, &c.*, Vol. i. Moxon & Co., 1868.

‡ *Athenæum* for Nov. 2, 23, and 30, 1867.

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my own); and that the only thing that has been wanting was the opportunity of revising my copy for press. The printer, to whom the MS. appears to have been (rather too trustingly) left, has in some instances misread my observations, and converted them into nonsense. Still, the admirers and lovers of Charles Lamb have, for the first time, the satisfaction of perusing the Correspondence (with very trifling exceptions, and those not of my making) in its genuine form, and in the language actually employed by the writer; and it is to be hoped that, with a little better care, the printer may give us the remainder of Lamb's Literary Remains, to all of which I applied the same principle of scrupulous adherence to my author's text. Even a cursory comparison between Talfourd's *so-called* editions of the Works, and that now in progress, will show what has been done; and the chief, if not the only, singularity connected with the business seems to be that, after publicly declaring that Mr. Hazlitt's edition was valueless, and that it had been found necessary to call in some one else to do his work over again at *four times the price*, the "some one else" should have thought proper to leave Mr. Hazlitt's edition just as it stood, and should not have so much as been at the trouble to correct a few obvious slips of the pen of mine (which I should have set right as a matter of course), or to run his eye through the proof-sheets for the purpose of detecting the typographical errors!

The extent to which the text and chronology of Lamb's correspondence have been misrepresented by Talfourd would not, perhaps, be credited upon my personal assertion of the fact, if the proof were not at hand in the edition now in progress of all his works, with the omitted passages supplied, and the garbled passages restored. The original MSS. have been consulted in every case where access to them was feasible; and I

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am happy to be able to say that I know of very few exceptions. I hardly think that the extraordinary (and often meaningless) liberties which Talfourd has allowed himself to take with the writings of his friend, both in his Letters and in his Essays, would have met with that friend's approval.

I have to return my best thanks to several gentlemen who, in the course of my researches upon this favourite subject, have assisted me to the extent of their power with information or material. I may mention W. Tite, Esq., M.P., who enabled me to furnish a facsimile of the first page of *Elia* on "Roast Pig," of which Mr. Tite owns the original autograph; F. W. Cosens, Esq., of Clapham, who lent me several inedited, or ill-edited, letters of Lamb, and a very interesting MS. in the handwriting of Southey, in which was a poem by Elia; Lieut.-Col. Cunningham, who kindly lent me his valuable chalk-drawing of Lamb, by Robert Hancock;* Theodore Martin, Esq.; James Yeowell, Esq., the zealous and always obliging sub-editor of *Notes and Queries*, who handed over to me all his Lamb jottings; C. W. Reynell, Esq.; Thornton Hunt, Esq.; Alexander Ireland, Esq.; Coventry Patmore, Esq.; Tom Taylor, Esq.; and others,

* Colonel Cunningham writes to me: "I think you do right to select the Hancock portrait of Lamb. Cottle speaks of it as a 'masterly likeness,' and adds, that 'Mr. Coleridge used often to look at this image of his old friend and schoolfellow, and express his warmest approbation of its accuracy.' Southey, too, wrote to Moxon (February 2, 1836): 'Cottle has a good likeness of Lamb in chalk, taken about 1798: it looks older than Lamb did at that time; but he was old-looking.'" The drawing, which is very poorly engraved in a recent publication on Lamb, was left by Joseph Cottle to Colonel Cunningham's niece, of whom the Colonel purchased it, with the likenesses of Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth, from the same pencil.

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who helped me in a variety of useful ways. Nor can I omit to acknowledge the assistance afforded to me by my printers, Messrs. Levey & Co., who favoured me with many serviceable suggestions during the revision of the work for press.

For the pictorial illustrations given in this work the reader is indebted to Mr. Camden Hotten, the publisher, who has taken no small pains to secure original sketches of old houses and places associated with the memory of Charles Lamb. The facsimiles, too (with the exception of the Roast-Pig page), have been supplied by him, together with various anecdotal memoranda which have been used in the text.

KENSINGTON.

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# MARY LAMB.

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# LETTERS AND POEMS

OF

# MARY LAMB.

## *CORRESPONDENCE OF MISS LAMB WITH MISS STODDART (AFTERWARDS MRS. HAZLITT), ETC.** (1803-27.)

THE existing remains of the following correspondence supply, perhaps, the most ample and valuable information that we have upon the domestic and fireside life of the Lambs; they are equally admirable, whether we look at them as pictures or as compositions; and, heretofore, they have been passed over in complete silence, for the simple reason that they have never been printed, and still remain in private hands. They do not, of course, tell us all that we might like to know; but they tell us much, and they suggest to us much. Nor should it be forgotten that the years they illustrate are years as to which a biographer is likely to feel grateful for an accession of light.†

* This section is reprinted (with large additions and improvements) from a paper contributed to *Macmillan's Magazine* for April, 1867. To secure the utmost exactness in the text, all the letters have been collated in proof with the originals: the orthography and punctuation have been in the main preserved.

† Here, for the first time, they are printed entire from the originals in my possession. In the *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, I introduced, indeed, such passages as were relevant to the immediate object there in view, the illustration of my grandfather's personal history; and,



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An entirely inaccurate account is given by Barry Cornwall of the origin of the friendship between Miss Lamb and one of her most intimate and valued friends, Miss Sarah Stoddart, who afterwards became the wife of William Hazlitt. The fact is, that Miss Lamb and Miss Stoddart had become acquainted some time before the year 1803, and that in that year the two ladies were in active and affectionate correspondence. Lamb had met Miss Stoddart's brother, Dr. Stoddart, at Godwin's, and at William Hazlitt's elder brother's, in Great Russell Street; and in this way the friendship must have sprung up. Miss Stoddart and William Hazlitt were not married till 1808; and, in the intervening five years (1803-1808), a series of letters passed between the future Mrs. Hazlitt and Miss Lamb, of which a few have been preserved. They are those written by Miss Lamb. Miss Stoddart's letters seem to have perished.

In September, 1803, Miss Stoddart was fluctuating between one of two gentlemen who were paying her attentions, and to both of whom she appears to have extended a certain share of encouragement. She took Mary Lamb entirely into her confidence, and reported to her from time to time how her love-affairs sped. Now, it was Mr. —— who was in the ascendant; and at another time, Mr. Somebody else.* Miss Lamb took occasion to tell her correspondent candidly that she could not enter so completely into her feelings as she would have wished, for that her ways were not Miss Stoddart's exactly. But there was one point in which Miss Lamb found serious fault with Miss Stoddart, and it was the

again, to the pages of *Macmillan* I contributed other portions which helped to supply certain missing links, and certain new light towards a complete picture of the lives and characters—I had nearly said *life and character*—of the Lambs.

* See the *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, i. 128 *et seq.*, for further particulars.

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want of confidence she displayed towards her brother the Doctor, and Mrs. Stoddart, and her failure to acquaint them with what she was about.

We are obliged to plunge a little *in medias res;* for the correspondence begins abruptly and imperfectly, and the earlier portions might be sought for in vain.

The first article in the series is, in fact, of the 21st September, 1803; and here Miss Stoddart is "my dear Sarah," and the relations are evidently most intimate and cordial. There had been, we may be sure, many previous interchanges of thoughts and gossip. Miss Lamb here says, in reference to Miss Stoddart's, in her opinion, most injudicious reserve:

### LETTER I.

[September 21, 1803.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I returned home from my visit yesterday, and was much pleased to find your letter; for I have been very anxious to hear how you are going on. I could hardly help expecting to see you when I came in; yet, though I should have rejoiced to have seen your merry face again, I believe it was better as it was—upon the whole; and, all things considered, it is certainly better you should go to Malta. The terms you are upon with your Lover* does (as you say it will) appear wondrous strange to me; however, as I cannot enter into your feelings, I certainly can have nothing to say to it, only that I sincerely wish you happy in your own way, however odd that way may appear to me to be. I would begin now to advise you to drop all correspondence with William;† but, as I said before, as I cannot enter into your feelings and views of things, *your ways not being*

* A Mr. Turner, to whom Miss Stoddart was at this stage engaged.

† *Not* William *Hazlitt*, but another and earlier William.

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*my ways*, why should I tell you what I would do in your situation? So, child, take thy own ways, and God prosper thee in them!

"'" One thing my advising spirit must say—use as little *Secrecy* as possible; and, as much as possible, make a friend of your sister-in-law*—you know I was not struck with her at first sight; but, upon your account, I have watched and marked her very attentively; and, while she was eating a bit of cold mutton in our kitchen, we had a serious conversation. From the frankness of her manner, I am convinced she is a person I could make a friend of; why should not you? We talked freely about you: she seems to have a just notion of your character, and will be fond of you, if you will let her.

" My father had a sister lived with us—of course, lived with my Mother, her sister-in-law; they were, in their different ways, the best creatures in the world—but they set out wrong at first. They made each other miserable for full twenty years of their lives—my Mother was a perfect gentlewoman, my Aunty as unlike a gentlewoman as you can possibly imagine a good old woman to be; so that my dear Mother (who, though you do not know it, is always in my poor head and heart) used to distress and weary her with incessant & unceasing attention and politeness, to gain her affection. The old woman could not return this in kind, and did not know what to make of it—thought it all deceit, and used to hate my Mother with a bitter hatred; which, of course, was soon returned with interest. A little frankness, and looking into each other's characters at first, would have spared all this, and they would have lived, as they died, fond of each other for the last few years of their life.

* Mrs., afterwards Lady, Stoddart. She was Isabella, daughter of the Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff, Bart.

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When we grew up, & harmonised them a little, they sincerely loved each other.

"My Aunt & my Mother were wholly unlike you and your sister, yet in some degree theirs is the secret history I believe of all sisters-in-law—and you will smile when I tell you I think myself the only woman in the world who could live with a brother's wife, and make a real friend of her, partly from early observation of the unhappy example I have just given you, and partly from a knack I know I have of looking into people's real characters, and never expecting them to act out of it—never expecting another to do as I would do in the same case. When you leave your Mother, and say, if you never shall see her again, you shall feel no remorse, and when you make a *jewish* bargain with your *Lover*, all this gives me no offence, because it is your nature, and your temper, and I do not expect or want you to be otherwise than you are. I love you for the good that is in you, and look for no change.

"*But*, certainly, you ought to struggle with the evil that does most easily beset you—a total want of politeness in behaviour, I would say modesty of behaviour, but that I should not convey to you my idea of the word modesty; for I certainly do not mean that you want *real modesty;* and what is usually called false, or mock, modesty is [a quality*] I certainly do not wish you to possess; yet I trust you know what I mean well enough.

"*Secrecy*, though you appear all frankness, is certainly a grand failing of yours, it is likewise your *brother's*, and, therefore, a family failing—by secrecy, I mean you both want the habit of telling each other at the moment every thing that happens—where you go, —and what you do,—that free communication of letters

* Slightly mutilated in the original; but the sense is clear. There are a few other *lacunæ*, also indicated by brackets.

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and opinions just as they arrive, as Charles and I do,—and which is, after all, the only groundwork of friendship. Your brother, I will answer for [it,] will never tell his wife or his sister all that [is in] his mind—he will receive letters, and not [mention it]—this is a fault Mrs. Stoddart can never [tell him of;] but she can, and will, feel it: though, [on] the whole, and in every other respect, she is [very] happy with him. Begin, for God's sake, at the first, and tell her every thing that passes—at first she may hear you with indifference; but in time this will gain her affection and confidence—show her all your letters (no matter if she does not show hers); it is a pleasant thing for a friend to put into one's hand a letter just fresh from the post. I would even say, begin with showing her this, but that it is written freely and loosely, and some apology ought to be made for it—which I know not how to make, for I must write freely or not at all.

"If you do this, she will tell your brother, you will say; and what then, quotha? It will beget a freer communication amongst you, which is a thing devoutly to be wished—

"God bless you, and grant you may preserve your integrity, and remain unmarried and penniless, and make William a good and a happy wife.

"Your affectionate friend,

"M. Lamb.

"Charles is very unwell, & my head aches. He sends his love: mine, with my best wishes, to your brother and sister.

"I hope I shall get another letter from you.

"Wednesday, 21st September, 1803.

[Indorsed:]

"Miss Stoddart, Dr. Stoddart's, Ryde, Isle of Wight.

"To be left at the Post-office."

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It is clear enough how this bears upon the early and painful history of the Lambs; and here we have, what we can get nowhere else, Miss Lamb's own sentiments about her mother and the family affairs, almost antecedently to her brother's acquisition of a name. In 1804—the same year in which Coleridge, it may be recollected, visited Dr. Stoddart at Malta—the doctor's sister also went out on a visit; and she was, in fact, there to receive Coleridge when he arrived. There are two letters from Miss Lamb to Miss Stoddart during this Maltese trip; and, if we add one more from Lamb himself to Southey (only discovered quite recently, and printed for the first time in these pages*), we have before us the entire (known) Lamb correspondence for the year! What Miss Lamb says about her brother and herself, and their common home, in these two communications, may, therefore, be worth attention.

When the second letter was written, Coleridge had arrived out, and his safety had been announced by Miss Stoddart. It must, consequently, be referred to June, 1804. There had been a misunderstanding between Lamb and Miss Stoddart's mother about the postage of certain letters. It would be a matter scarcely worth notice here, were it not that Miss Lamb, in explaining it to her correspondent, touches interestingly on the character of Charles:

### Letter II.

[Early in 1804.]

"My dearest Sarah,

"I will just write a few hasty lines to say Coleridge is setting off sooner than we expected; and I

* I owe the opportunity of presenting it to the reader to its possessor, my obliging and kind friend, F. W. Cosens, Esq., of Clapham. The letter is inserted elsewhere, among the Inedited Remains of C. L.

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every moment expect him to call in one of his great hurrys for this. Charles intended to write by him, but has not: most likely he will send a letter after him to Portsmouth: if he does, you will certainly hear from him soon. We rejoiced with exceeding great joy to hear of your safe arrival: I hope your brother will return home in a few years a very rich man. Seventy pounds in one fortnight is a pretty beginning—

"I envy your brother the pleasure of seeing Coleridge drop in unexpectedly upon him; we talk—but it is but wild and idle talk—of following him: he is to get my brother some little snug place of a thousand a year, and we are to leave all, and come and live among ye. What a pretty dream.

"Coleridge is very ill. I dread the thoughts of his long voyage—write as soon as he arrives, whether he does or not, and tell me how he is.

"Jamaica bodies. . . .*

"He has got letters of recommendation to Governor Ball,† and God knows who; and he will talk & talk, and be universally admired.‡ But I wish to write for him a *letter of recommendation* to Mrs. Stoddart, and to yourself, to take upon ye, on his first arrival, to be kind affectionate nurses; and mind, now, that you perform this duty faithfully, and write me a good account of yourself. Behave to him as you would to me, or to Charles, if we came sick and unhappy to you.

"I have no news to send you; Coleridge will tell you how we are going on—Charles has lost the news-

* There is a word or two here, which to me is illegible.

† Sir Alexander Ball, Governor of Malta, of whom there is a long account in the *Friend*.

‡ The reverential affection of Miss Lamb for Coleridge seems to the present writer to have been one of the most delightful traits in her amiable and admirable character.

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paper;* but what we dreaded as an evil has proved a great blessing, for we have both strangely recovered our health and spirits since this has happened; and I hope, when I write next, I shall be able to tell you Charles has begun something which will produce a little money; for it is not well to be *very poor*—which we certainly are at this present writing.

"I sit writing here, and thinking almost you will see it to-morrow; and what a long, long time it will be ere you receive this—When I saw your letter, I fancy'd you were even just then in the first bustle of a new reception, every moment seeing new faces, & staring at new objects, when, at that time, every thing had become familiar to you; and the strangers, your new dancing partners, had perhaps become gossiping fireside friends. You tell me of your gay, splendid doings; tell me, likewise, what manner of home-life you lead—is a quiet evening in a Maltese drawing room as pleasant as those we have passed in Mitre Court and Bell yard?—tell me all about it, every thing pleasant, & every thing unpleasant, that befalls you.

"I want you to say a great deal about yourself. *Are you happy? and do you not repent going out?* I wish I could see you for one hour only.

"Remember me affectionately to your sister and brother; and tell me, when you write, if Mrs. Stoddart likes Malta, and how the climate agrees with her and with thee.

"We heard you were taken prisoners, and for several days believed the tale.

"How did the pearls, and the fine court finery, bear the fatigues of the voyage, & how often have they been worne and admired?

"Rickman wants to know if you are going to be

* The *Morning Post.*

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married yet—satisfy him in that little particular when you write.

"The Fenwicks send their love, and Mrs. Reynolds* her love, and the little old lady her best respects.

"Mrs. Jefferies, who I see now and then, talks of you with tears in her eyes, and, when she heard you was taken prisoner, Lord! how frightened she was. She has heard, she tells me, that Mr. Stoddart is to have a pension of two thousand a year, whenever he chuses to return to England.

"God bless you, and send you all manner of comforts & happinesses.

"Your most affectionate friend,

"MARY LAMB."

"How-do? how-do? No time to write. S. T. C. going off in a great hurry. CH. LAMB."

## LETTER III.

[May, 1804.]

"MY DEAREST SARAH,

"Your letter, which contained the news of Coleridge's arrival, was a most welcome one; for we had begun to entertain very unpleasant apprehensions for his safety; and your kind reception of the forlorn wanderer gave me the greatest pleasure, and I thank you for it in my own & my brother's name. I shall depend upon you for hearing of his welfare; for he does not write himself; but, as long as we know he is safe, and in such kind friends' hands, we do not mind. Your letters, my dear Sarah, are to me very, very precious ones. They are the kindest, best, most natural

* A poor old lady, one of Lamb's pensioners.

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ones I ever received. The one containing the news of the arrival of Coleridge [is] perhaps the best I ever saw; and your old friend Charles is of my opinion. We sent it off to Mrs. Coleridge & the Wordsworths—as well because we thought it our duty to give them the first notice we had of our dear friend's safety, as that we were proud of shewing our Sarah's pretty letter.

"The letters we received a few days after from you and your brother were far less welcome ones. I rejoiced to hear your sister is well; but I grieved for the loss of the dear baby; and I am sorry to find your brother is not so successful as he at first expected to be; and yet I am almost tempted to wish his ill fortune may send him over us again. He has a friend, I understand, who is now at the head of the Admiralty; why may he not return, & make a fortune here?

"I cannot condole with you very sincerely upon your little failure in the fortune-making-way. If you regret it, so do I. But I hope to see you a comfortable English wife; and the forsaken, forgotten William, of English-partridge memory, I have still a hankering after. However, I thank you for your frank communication, & I beg you will continue it in future; & if I do not agree with a good grace to your having a Maltese husband, I will wish you happy, provided you make it a part of your marriage articles that your husband shall allow you to come over sea & make me one visit; else may neglect and overlookedness be your portion while you stay there.

"I would condole with you when the misfortune has fallen your poor leg; but such is the blessed distance we are at from each other, that I hope, before you receive this, you have forgot it ever happened.

"Our compliments [to] the high ton at the Maltese court. Your brother is so profuse of them to me, that

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being, as you know, so unused to them, they perplex me sadly; in future, I beg they may be discontinued. They always remind me of the free, and, I believe, very improper, letter I wrote to you while you were at the Isle of Wight. The more kindly you & your brother & sister took the impertinent advice contained in it, the more certain I feel that it was unnecessary, & therefore highly improper. Do not let your brother compliment me into the memory of it again.

"My brother has had a letter from your Mother, which has distressed him sadly—about the postage of some letters being paid by my brother—your silly brother, it seems, has informed your Mother (I did not think your brother could have been so silly) that Charles had grumbled at paying the said postage. The fact was, just at that time we were very poor, having lost the Morning Post, & we were beginning to practise a strict economy. My brother, who never makes up his mind whether he will be a Miser or a Spendthrift, is at all times a strange mixture of both: of this failing, the even economy of your correct brother's temper makes him an ill judge. The miserly part of Charles, at that time smarting under his recent loss, then happened to reign triumphant; and he would not write, or let me write, so often as he wished, because the postage cost two and four pence. Then came two or three of your poor Mother's letters nearly together; and the two & four pences he wished, but grudged, to pay for his own, he was forced to pay for hers. In this dismal distress, he applied to Fenwick to get his friend Motley to send them free from Portsmouth. This Mr. Fenwick could have done for half a word's speaking; but this he did not do! Then Charles foolishly & unthinkingly complained to your brother in a half serious, half joking way; & your brother has wickedly, & with malice afore thought, told your

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Mother. Ô fye upon him! what will your Mother think of us?

"I too feel my share of blame in this vexatious business; for I saw the unlucky paragraph in my brother's letter; & I had a kind of foreboding that it would come to your Mother's ears—although I had a higher opinion of your brother's good sense than I find he deserved. By entreaties & prayers, I might have prevailed on my brother to say nothing about it. But I make a point of conscience never to interfere or cross my brother in the humour he happens to be in. It always appears to me to be a vexatious kind of Tyranny, that women have no business to exercise over men, which, merely because *they having a better judgement*, they have the power to do. Let *men* alone, and at last we find they come round to the right way, which *we*, by a kind of intuition, perceive at once. But better, far better, that we should let them often do wrong, than that they should have the torment of a Monitor always at their elbows.

"Charles is sadly fretted now, I know, at what to say to your Mother. I have made this long preamble about it to induce [you,] if possible, to reinstate us in your Mother's good graces. Say to her it was a jest misunderstood; tell her Charles Lamb is not the shabby fellow she & her son took him for; but that he is now & then a trifle whimsical or so. I do not ask your brother to do this, for I am offended with him for the mischief he has made.

"I feel that I have too lightly passed over the interesting account you sent me of your late disappointment. It was not because I did not feel and comple[te]ly enter into the affair with you. You surprise & please me with the frank & generous way in which you deal with your Lovers, taking a refusal from their so prudential hearts with a better grace & more good humour than

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other women accept a suitor's service—continue this open artless conduct, & I trust you will at last find some man who has sense enough to know you are well worth risking a peaceable life of poverty for. I shall yet live to see you a poor, but happy, English wife.

"Remember me most affectionately to Coleridge; & I thank you again & again for all your kindness to him. To dear Mrs. Stoddart & your brother, I beg my best love; and to you all I wish health & happiness, & a *soon* return to Old England.

"I have sent to Mr. Burrel's for your kind present; but unfortunately he is not in town. I am impatient to see my fine silk handkerchiefs; & I thank you for them, not as a present, for I do not love presents, but as a . . .* remembrance of your old friend. Farewell.

"I am, my best Sarah,

"Your most affectionate friend,

"MARY LAMB.

"Good wishes, and all proper remembrances, from old nurse, Mrs. Jeffries, Mrs. Reynolds, Mrs. Rickman, &c. &c. &c.

"Long live Queen Hoop-oop-oop-oo, and all the old merry phantoms!"

"MY DEAR MISS STODDART,

"Mary has written so fully to you, that I have nothing to add but that, in all the kindness she has exprest, and loving desire to see you again, I bear my full part. You will, perhaps, like to tear this half from the sheet, and give your brother only his strict due, the remainder. So I will just repay your late kind letter

* Illegible.

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with this short postscript to hers. Come over here, & let us all be merry again.

"C. LAMB."

The next letter in the series was written to Miss Stoddart at Salisbury. She had returned to England, as she left it, unmarried: she had not succeeded in finding a Maltese husband, of which her brother the Doctor held out to her the hope, as an inducement for the journey.

LETTER IV.

[September, 1805.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"Certainly you are the best letter writer (besides writing the best hand) in the world. I have just been reading over again your two long letters, & I perceive they make me very envious. I have taken a bran new pen, & put on my *spectacles*, & am peering with all my might to see the lines in the paper, which the sight of your even lines had well nigh tempted me to rule: & I have moreover taken two pinches of snuff extraordinary, to clear my head, which feels more cloudy than common this fine, chearful morning.

"All I can gather from your clear & I have no doubt, faithful history of Maltese politics is, that the good Doctor, though a firm friend, an excellent fancier of Brooch's, a good husband, an upright Advocate, and, in short, all that they say upon tomb stones (for I do not recollect that they celebrate any fraternal virtues there)—yet is he but a *moody* brother—that your sister in law is pretty much like what all sisters in law have been since the first happy invention of the happy marriage state;—that friend Coleridge has undergone no alteration by crossing the Atlantic,—for his friendliness to you, as well as all the oddities you mention, are just

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what one ought to look for from him; and that you, my dear Sarah, have proved yourself just as unfit to flourish in a little, proud Garrison Town as I did shrewdly suspect you were before you went there.

"If I possibly can, I will prevail upon Charles to write to your brother by the conveyance you mention; but he is so unwell, I almost fear the fortnight will slip away before I can get him in the right vein, indeed, it has been sad & heavy times with us lately: when I am pretty well, his low spirits throws me back again; & when he begins to get a little chearful, then I do the same kind office for him. I heartily wish for the arrival of Coleridge; a few such evenings as we have sometimes passed with him would wind us up, and set us a going again.

"Do not say any thing, when you write, of our low spirits—it will vex Charles. You would laugh, or you would cry, perhaps both, to see us sit together, looking at each other with long and rueful faces, & saying, 'how do you do?' & 'how do you do?' & then we fall a-crying, & say we will be better on the morrow. He says we are like tooth-ach & his friend gum bile—which, though a kind of ease, is but an uneasy kind of ease, a comfort of rather an uncomfortable sort.

"I rejoice to hear of your Mother's amendment; when you can leave her with any satisfaction to yourself —which, as her sister, I think I understand by your letters, is with her, I hope you may soon be able to do— let me know upon what plan you mean to come to Town. Your brother proposed your being six months in Town, & six with your Mother; but he did not then know of your poor Mother's illness. By his desire, I enquired for a respectable family for you to board with; & from Capt[n] Burney I heard of one I thought would suit you at that time, he particularly desires I would not think of your

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being with us, not thinking, I conjecture, the home of a single man *respectable* enough. Your brother gave me most unlimited orders to domineer over you, to be the inspector of all your actions, & to direct & govern you with a stern voice & a high hand, to be, in short, a very elder brother over you—does not the hearing of this, my meek pupil, make you long to come to London? I am making all the proper enquiries against the time of the newest & most approved modes (being myself mainly ignorant in these points) of etiquette, & nicely correct maidenly manners.

"But to speak seriously. I mean, when we mean [meet], that we will lay our heads together, & consult & contrive the best way of making the best girl in the world the fine Lady her brother wishes to see her; & believe me, Sarah, it is not so difficult a matter as one is sometimes apt to imagine. I have observed many a demure Lady, who passes muster admirably well, who, I think, we could easily learn to imitate in a week or two. We will talk of these things when we meet. In the mean time, I give you free license to be happy & merry at Salisbury in any way you can. Has the partridge-season opened any communication between you & William—as I allow you to be imprudent till I see you, I shall expect to hear you have invited him to taste his own birds. Have you scratched him out of your will yet? Rickman is married, & that is all the news I have to send you.

"Your Wigs were sent by Mr. Varvell about five months ago; therefore, he could have arrived when you came away.

"I seem, upon looking over my letter again, to have written too lightly of your distresses at Malta; but, however I may have written, believe me, I enter very feelingly into all your troubles. I love you, & I love



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your brother; & between you, both of whom I think have been to blame, I know not what to say—only this I say, try to think as little as possible of past miscarriages; it was, perhaps, so ordered by Providence, that you might return home to be a comfort to your poor Mother. And do not, I conjure you, let her unhappy malady afflict you too deeply. I speak from experience, & from the opportunity I have had of much observation in such cases, that insane people, in the fancy's they take into their heads, do not feel as one in a sane state of mind does under the real evil of poverty, the perception of having done wrong, or any such thing that runs in their heads.

"Think as little as you can, & let your whole care be to be certain that she is treated with *tender*ness. I lay a stress upon this, because it is a thing of which people in her state are uncommonly susceptible, & which hardly any one is at all aware of, a hired nurse *never*, even though in all other respects they are good kind of people. I do not think your own presence necessary, unless she *takes to you very much*, except for the purpose of seeing with your own eyes that she is very kindly treated.

"I do long to see you! God bless & comfort you!

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB."

Miss Lamb now begins to approach ground which domestic and personal circumstances rendered peculiarly delicate. The painful state in which Miss Stoddart's mother was at this time appears to have had the effect of bringing very strongly to Miss Lamb's own mind and thoughts the occasional eclipses of reason which she herself had been now for years in the habit of experiencing:

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## Letter V.

[October, 1805.]

"My dear Sarah,

"I have made many attempts at writing to you, but it has always brought your troubles and my own so strongly into my mind, that I have been obliged to leave off, and make Charles write for me. I am resolved now, however few lines I write, this shall go; for I know, my kind friend, you will like once more to see my own handwriting.

"I have been for these few days past in rather better spirits, so that I begin almost to feel myself once more a living creature, and to hope for happier times; and in that hope I include the prospect of once more seeing my dear Sarah in peace and comfort in our old garret. How did I wish for your presence to cheer my drooping heart when I returned home from banishment.

"Is your being with, or near, your poor dear Mother necessary to her comfort? does she take any notice of you? and is there any prospect of her recovery? How I grieve for her & for you— — —

"I went to the Admiralty about your Mother's pension; from thence I was directed to an office in Lincoln's Inn, where they are paid. They informed me at the office that it could not be paid to any person except Mr. Wray, without a letter of attorney from your Mother; and as the stamp for that will cost one pound, it will, perhaps, be better to leave it till Mr. Wray comes to town, if he does come before Christmas; they tell me it can be received any Thursday between this & Christmas. If you send up a letter of Attorney, let it be in my name. If you think, notwithstanding their positive assurance to the contrary, that you can put me in any way of getting it without, let me know. Are you ac-

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quainted with Mr. Pearce, and will my taking another letter from you to him be of any service? or will a letter from Mr. Wray be of any use?—though I fear not, for they said at the office they had orders to pay no pension without a letter of Attorney.

"The attestation you sent up, they said, was sufficient, & that the same must be sent every year. Do not let us neglect this business; & make use of me in any way you can.

"I have much to thank you and your kind brother for; I kept the dark silk, as you may suppose: you have made me very fine; the broche is very beautiful. Mrs. Jeffries wept for gratitude when she saw your present; she desires all manner of thanks and good wishes. Your maid's sister was gone to live a few miles from town; Charles, however, found her out, and gave her the handkerchief.

"I want to know if you have seen William, & if there is any prospect in future there. All you said in your letter from Portsmouth that related to him was burnt so in the fumigating, that we could only make out that it was unfavourable, but not the particulars; tell us again how you go on, and if you have seen him: I conceit affairs will some how be made up between you at last.

"I want to know how your brother goes on. Is he likely to make a very good fortune, & in how long a time? And how is he, in the way of home comforts—I mean, is he very happy with Mrs. Stoddart? This was a question I could not ask while you were there, and perhaps is not a fair one now; but I want to know how you all went on—and, in short, twenty little foolish questions that one ought, perhaps, rather to ask when we meet, than to write about. But do make me a little acquainted with the inside of the good Doctor's house, and what passes therein.

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"Was Coleridge often with you? or did your brother & Col. argue long arguements, till between the two great argue-ers there grew a little coolness, or perchance the mighty friendship between Coleridge & your Sovereign Governor, Sir Alexander Ball, might create a kind of jealousy, for we fancy something of a coldness did exist, from the little mention ever made of C. in your brother's letters.

"Write us, my good girl, a long, gossiping letter, answering all these foolish questions—and tell me any silly thing you can recollect—any, the least particular, will be interesting to us, and we will never tell tales out of school: but we used to wonder & wonder, how you all went on; and when you was coming home we said, 'Now we shall hear all from Sarah.'

"God bless you, my dear friend.

"I am ever your affectionate

"MARY LAMB.

"If you have sent Charles any commissions he has not executed, write me word—he says he has lost or mislaid a letter desiring him to inquire about a wig.

"Write two letters—one of business & pensions, and one all about Sarah Stoddart & Malta. Is Mr. Moncrief doing well there?

"Wednesday morning.

"We have got a picture of Charles; do you think your brother would like to have it? If you do, can you put us in a way how to send it?"

Miss Lamb was afterwards sorry that she had allowed this letter to go, and in a few days she followed it up by another, in which she gave expression to her feeling upon it:

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## Letter VI.

[November 9, 1805.]

"My dear Sarah,

"After a very feverish night, I writ a letter to you; and I have been distressed about it ever since. In the first place, I have thought I treated too lightly your differences with your brother—which I freely enter into and feel for, but which I rather wished to defer saying much about till we meet. But that which gives me most concern is the way in which I talked about your Mother's illness, & which I have since feared you might construe into my having a doubt of your showing her proper attention without my impertinent interference. God knows, nothing of this kind was ever in my thoughts; but I have entered very deeply into your affliction with regard to your Mother; and while I was wishing, the many poor souls in the kind of desponding way she is in, whom I have seen, came afresh into my mind; & all the mismanagement with which I have seen them treated was strong in my mind, & I wrote under a forcible impulse, which I could not at that time resist, but I have fretted so much about it since, that I think it is the last time I will ever let my pen run away with me.

"Your kind heart will, I know, even if you have been a little displeased, forgive me, when I assure you my spirits have been so much hurt by my last illness, that at times I hardly know what I do. I do not mean to alarm you about myself, or to plead an excuse; but I am very much otherwise than you have always known me. I do not think any one perceives me altered, but I have lost all self-confidence in my own actions, & one cause of my low spirits is, that I never feel satisfied with any thing I do—a perception of not being in a sane

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state perpetually haunts me. I am ashamed to confess this weakness to you; which, as I am so sensible of, I ought to strive to conquer. But I tell you, that you may excuse any part of my letter that has given offence: for your not answering it, when you are such a punctual correspondent, has made me very uneasy.

"Write immediately, my dear Sarah, but do not notice this letter, nor do not mention any thing I said relative to your poor Mother. Your handwriting will convince me you are friends with me; & if Charles, who must see my letter, was to know I had first written foolishly, & then fretted about the event of my folly, he would both ways be angry with me.

"I would desire you to direct to me at home, but your hand is so well known to Charles, that that would not do. Therefore, take no notice of my megrums till we meet, which I most ardently long to do. An hour spent in your company would be a cordial to my drooping heart.

"Pray write directly, and believe me, ever

"Your affectionate friend,

"M. LAMB.

"*Nov.* 14.—I have kept this by me till to-day, hoping every day to hear from you. If you found the seal a clumsy one, it is because I opened the wafer.

"Write, I beg, by the return of the post; & as I am very anxious to hear whether you are, as I fear, dissatisfied with me, you shall, if you please, direct my letter to Nurse. Her direction is, Mrs. Grant, at Mr. Smith's, *Maidenhead*, Ram Court, Fleet Street.

"I was not able, you know, to notice, when I writ to Malta, your letter concerning an insult you received from a vile wretch there; and as I mostly show my

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letters to Charles, I have never named it since. Did it ever come to your brother's knowledge? Charles & I were very uneasy at your account of it. I wish I could see you.

"Yours ever,

"M. LAMB.

"I do not mean to continue a secret correspondence, but you must oblige me with this one letter. In future I will always show my letters before they go, which will be a proper check upon my wayward pen.

"Miss Stoddart, Salisbury."

In the spring of 1806, Miss Stoddart stayed with the Lambs for a short time; she returned to Salisbury on the 22d of April; and on the same day Miss Lamb wrote her a long news-letter:

## LETTER VII.

[April 22, 1806.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I have heard that Coleridge was lately going through Sicily to Rome with a party, but that, being unwell, he returned back to Naples. We think there is some mistake in this account, and that his intended journey to Rome was in his former jaunt to Naples. If you know that at that time he had any such intention, will you write instantly? for I do not know whether I ought to write to Mrs. Coleridge or not.

"I am going to make a sort of a promise to myself and to you, that I will write you kind of journal-like letters of the daily what-we-do matters, as they occur. This day seems to me a kind of new era in our time. It is not a birthday, nor a new-year's day, nor a leave-off-

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smoking day; but it is about an hour after the time of leaving you, our poor Phœnix, in the Salisbury Stage; and Charles has just left me for the first time to go to his lodgings;* and I am holding a solitary consultation with myself as to the how I shall employ myself.

"Writing plays, novels, poems, and all manner of such-like vapouring and vapourish schemes are floating in my head, which at the same time aches with the thought of parting from you, and is perplext at the idea of I cannot tell what about notion that I have not made you half so comfortable as I ought to have done, and a melancholy sense of the dull prospect you have before you on your return home. Then I think I will make my new gown; & now I consider the white petticoat will be better candle-light worth; and then I look at the fire, and think, if the irons was but down, I would iron my Gowns — you having put me out of conceit of mangling.

"So much for an account of my own confused head; and now for yours. Returning home from the Inn, we took that to pieces, and ca[n]vassed you as you know is our usual custom. We agreed we should miss you sadly, and that you had been, what you yourself discovered, *not at all in our way;* and although, if the Post Master should happen to open this, it would appear to him to be no great compliment, yet you, who enter so warmly into the interior of our affairs, will understand and value it, as well as what we likewise asserted, that since you have been with us you have done but one foolish thing, *vide* Pinckhorn (excuse my bad Latin, if it should chance to mean exactly contrary to what I intend). We praised you for the very friendly way in which you

* Some lodgings C. L. had hired at three shillings a week, under the impression that he could write there with greater facility and less constraint.

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regarded all our whimsies, and, to use a phrase of Coleridge's, *understood us.* We had, in short, no drawback on our eulogy on your merit, except lamenting the want of respect you have to yourself—the want of a certain dignity of action, you know what I mean, which —though it only broke out in the acceptance of the old Justice's book, and was, as it were, smothered and almost extinct, while you were here—yet is it so native a feeling in your mind, that you will do whatever the present moment prompts you to do, that I wish you would take that one slight offence seriously to heart, and make it a part of your daily consideration to drive this unlucky propensity, root and branch, out of your character.—Then, mercy on us, what a perfect little gentlewoman you will be!!!—

"You are not yet arrived at the first stage of your journey; yet have I the sense of your absence so strong upon me, that I was really thinking what news I had to send you, and what had happened since you had left us. Truly nothing, except that Martin Burney* met us in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, and borrowed four-pence, of the repayment of which sum I will send you due notice.

"*Friday* [*April* 20, 1806].—Last night I told Charles of your matrimonial overtures from Mr. White, and of the cause of that business being at a *stand-still.* Your generous conduct in acquainting Mr. White with the vexatious affair at Malta highly pleased him. He entirely approves of it. You would be quite comforted to hear what he said on the subject.

"He wishes you success, and, when Coleridge comes, will consult with him about what is best to be done.

* Son of Captain James Burney. Lamb had a warm affection for him; and, it appears, too, from the dedication to Burney of the first collected edition of his *Works*, in 1818, a considerable opinion of his judgment and knowledge.

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But I charge you, be most strictly cautious how you proceed yourself. Do not give Mr. W. any reason to think you indiscreet; let him return of his own accord, and keep the probability of his doing so full in your mind; so, I mean, as to regulate your whole conduct by that expectation. Do not allow yourself to see, or in any way renew your acquaintance with, William, nor do not do any other silly thing of that kind; for, you may depend upon it, he will be a kind of spy upon you, and, if he observes nothing that he disapproves of, you will certainly hear of him again in time.

"Charles is gone to finish the farce,* and I am to hear it read this night. I am so uneasy between my hopes and fears of how I shall like it, that I do not know what I am doing. I need not tell you so, for before I send this I shall be able to tell you all about it. If I think it will amuse you, I will send you a copy. *The bed was very cold last night.*

"*Feb.* [*April*†] 21.—I have received your letter, and am happy to hear that your mother has been so well in your absence, which I wish had been prolonged a little, for you have been wanted to copy out the Farce, in the writing of which I made many an unlucky blunder.

"The said Farce I carried (after many consultations of who was the most proper person to perform so important an office) to Wroughton, the Manager of Drury Lane. He was very civil to me; said it did not depend upon himself, but that he would put it into the Proprietors' hands, and that we should certainly have an answer from them.

"I have been unable to finish this sheet before, for

* *Mr. H.*

† The letter is indorsed April 22, 1806, in Miss L.'s own hand; and this corresponds with the post-mark.

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Charles has taken a week's hollidays [from his] lodging, to rest himself after his labour, & we have talked to-night of nothing but the Farce night and day; but yesterday [I carri]ed it to Wroughton; & since it has been out of the [way, our] minds have been a little easier. I wish you had [been with] us, to have given your opinion. I have half a mind to sc[ribble] another copy, and send it you. I like it very much, and cannot help having great hopes of its success.

"I would say I was very sorry for the death of Mr. White's father; but not knowing the good old gentleman, I cannot help being as well satisfied that he is gone—for his son will feel rather lonely, and so perhaps he may chance to visit again Winterslow. You so well describe your brother's grave, lecturing letter, that you make me ashamed of part of mine. I would fain re-write it, leaving out my '*sage advice;*' but if I begin another letter, something may fall out to prevent me from finishing it,—and, therefore, skip over it as well as you can; it shall be the last I ever send you.

"It is well enough, when one is talking to a friend, to hedge in an odd word by way of counsel now & then; but there is something mighty irksome in its staring upon one in a letter, where one ought only to see kind words & friendly remembrances.

"I have heard a vague report from the *Dawes** (the pleasant-looking young lady we called upon was Miss Daw[e]), that Coleridge returned back to Naples: they are to make further enquiries, & let me know the particulars. We have seen little or nothing of Manning since you went. Your friend [George] Burnett calls as usual, for Charles *to point out something for him.* I miss you sadly, & but for the fidget I have been in about the

* James Dawe, R.A.: the hero of the article in the *Englishman's Magazine.*

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Farce, I should have missed you still more. I am sorry you cannot get your money, continue to tell us all your perplexities, and do not mind being called Widow Blackacre.

"Say all in your mind about your *Lover*, now Charles knows of it; he will be as anxious to hear as me. All the time we can spare from talking of the characters & plot of the Farce, we talk of you. I have got a fresh bottle of brandy to-day: if you were here, you should have a glass, *three parts brandy*—so you should. I bought a pound of bacon to-day, not so good as yours. I wish the little caps were finished. I am glad the Medicines & the Cordials bore the fatigue of their journey so well. I promise you I will write often, & *not mind the postage.* God bless you. Charles does *not* send his love, because he is *not* here.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"*Write as often as ever you can.* Do not work too hard.

[Indorsed:]
"Miss Stoddart, Winterslow, near Salisbury.
"5*s.* 1*d.* paid."

Miss Lamb sent a sort of sequel to this letter on the 14th May,* and there she speaks of her brother in terms which must be understood *Lambily:*

* Miss Lamb has indorsed this letter, by mistake, *March* 14, 1806. The post-mark appears to be May 16. A later letter, which, from internal evidence, was clearly written in 1808, is indorsed by the writer 1806.

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## Letter VIII.

[May 14, 1806.]

"My dear Sarah,

"No intention of forfeiting my promise, but mere want of time has prevented me from continuing my *journal*. You seem pleased with the long, stupid one I sent, and, therefore, I shall certainly continue to write at every opportunity. The reason why I have not had any time to spare, is because Charles has given himself some hollidays after the hard labour of finishing his farce, and, therefore, I have had none of the evening leisure I promised myself. Next week he promises to go to work again. I wish he may happen to hit upon some new plan, to his mind, for another farce: when once begun, I do not fear his perseverance, but the hollidays he has allowed himself, I fear, will unsettle him. I look forward to next week with the same kind of anxiety I did to the first entrance at the new lodging. We have had, as you know, so many teasing anxieties of late, that I have got a kind of habit of foreboding that we shall never be comfortable, & that he will never settle to work: which I know is wrong, and which I will try with all my might to overcome—for certainly, if I could but see things as they really are, our prospects are considerably improved since the memorable day of Mrs. Fenwick's last visit. I have heard nothing of that good lady, or of the Fells, since you left us.

"We have been visiting a little—to Norris's, to Godwin's; and last night we did not come home from Captain Burney's till two o'clock: the *Saturday night* was changed to *Friday*, because Rickman could not be there to-night. We had the best *tea things*, and the litter all cleared away, and every thing as handsome as

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possible—Mrs. Rickman being of the party. Mrs. Rickman is much *increased in size* since we saw her last, and the alteration in her strait shape wonderfully improves her. Phillips was there, and Charles had a long batch of Cribbage with him: and, upon the whole, we had the most chearful evening I have known there a long time. To-morrow, we dine at Holcroft's. These things rather fatigue me; but I look for a quiet week next week, & hope for better times. We have had Mrs. Brooks & all the Martins, and we have likewise been there; so that I seem to have been in a continual bustle lately. I do not think Charles cares so much for the Martins as he did, which is a fact you will be glad to hear—though you must not name them when you write: always remember, when I tell you any thing about them, not to mention their names in return.

"We have had a letter from your brother by the same mail as yours, I suppose; he says he does not mean to return till summer, & that is all he says about himself; his letter being entirely filled with a long story about Lord Nelson—but nothing more than what the newspapers have been full of, such as his last words, &c. Why does he tease you with so much *good advice;* is it merely to fill up his letters, as he filled ours with Lord Nelson's exploits? or has any new thing come out against you? has he discovered Mr. Curse-a-rat's correspondence? I hope you will not write to that *news-sending* gentleman any more. I promised never more to give my *advice*, but one may be allowed to *hope* a little; and I also hope you will have something to tell me soon about Mr. W[hite]: have you seen him yet? I am sorry to hear your Mother is not better, but I am in a hoping humour just now, & I cannot help hoping that we shall all see happier days. The bells are just now ringing for the taking of the *Cape of Good Hope.*

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"I have written to Mrs. Coleridge to tell her that her husband is at Naples; your brother slightly named his being there, but he did not say that he had heard from him himself. Charles is very busy at the Office; he will be kept there to-day till seven or eight o'Clock: and he came home very *smoky & drinky* last night; so that I am afraid a hard day's work will not agree very well with him.

"O dear! what shall I say next? Why this I will say next, that I wish you was with me; I have been eating a mutton chop all alone, and I have been just looking in the pint porter pot, which I find quite empty, and yet I am still very dry. If you was with me, we would have a glass of brandy & water; but it is quite impossible to drink brandy & water by oneself; therefore, I must wait with patience till the kettle boils. I hate to drink tea alone, it is worse than dining alone. We have got a fresh cargo of biscuits from Captain Burney's. I have—

"*March* [*May*] 14.—Here I was interrupted; and a long, tedious interval has intervened, during which I have had neither time nor inclination to write a word. The Lodging*—that pride and pleasure of your heart & mine, is given up, *and here he is again*—Charles, I mean —as unsettled and as undetermined as ever. When he went to the poor lodging, after the hollidays I told you he had taken, he could not endure the solitariness of them, and I had no rest for the sole of my foot till I promised to believe his solemn protestations that he could & would write as well at home as there. Do you believe this?

"I have no power over Charles—he will do—what

* This points, of course, to the abandonment of the three-shillings-a-week apartment, which at first occasioned Miss Lamb considerable misgiving.

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he will do. But I ought to have some little influence over myself. And therefore I am most manfully resolving to turn over a new leaf with my own mind. Your visit to us, though not a very comfortable one to yourself, has been of great use to me. I set you up in my fancy as a kind of *thing* that takes an interest in my concerns; and I hear you talking to me, and arguing the matter very learnedly, when I give way to despondency. You shall hear a good account of me, and the progress I make in altering my fretful temper to a calm & quiet one. It is but being once thorowly convinced one is wrong, to make one resolve to do so no more; and I know my dismal faces have been almost as great a drawback upon Charles's comfort, as his feverish, teazing ways have been upon mine. Our love for each other has been the torment of our lives hitherto. I am most seriously intending to bend the whole force of my mind to counteract this, and I think I see some prospect of success.

"Of Charles ever bringing any work to pass at home, I am very doubtful; and of the farce succeeding, I have little or no hope; but if I could once get into the way of being chearful myself, I should see an easy remedy in leaving town & living cheaply, almost wholly alone; but till I do find we really are comfortable alone, and by ourselves, it seems a dangerous experiment. We shall certainly stay where we are till after next Christmas; and in the mean time, as I told you before, all my whole thoughts shall be to *change* myself into just such a chearful soul as you would be in a lone house, with no companion but your brother, if you had nothing to vex you—nor no means of wandering after *Curse-a-rats.*

"Do write soon: though I write all about myself, I am thinking all the while of you, and I am uneasy at the length of time it seems since I heard from you. Your



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Mother, and Mr. White, is running continually in my head; and this *second winter* makes me think how cold, damp, and forlorn your solitary house will feel to you. I would your feet were perched up again on our fender.

"Manning is not yet gone. Mrs. Holcroft is brought to bed. Mrs. Reynolds has been confined at home with illness, but is recovering. God bless you.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB."

With respect to Miss Lamb's statement about her desire to go and live cheaply somewhere in the country, it is a little curious that we have* a letter from Lamb to a friend, which compels us to believe that *he* contemplated at one time, at least, *an absolute parting from his sister* as a possible contingency.

In a letter of June 2, 1806, is something which will be fresh about the *Tales from Shakespeare*, on which Miss Lamb was already engaged:

## LETTER IX.

[June 2, 1806.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"You say truly that I have sent you too many make-believe letters. I do not mean to serve you so again, if I can help it. I have been very ill for some days past with the toothache. Yesterday, I had it drawn; and I feel myself greatly relieved, but far from easy, for my head & my jaws still ache; and, being unable to do any business, I would wish to write you a long letter, to atone for my former offences; but I feel so languid, that I am afraid wishing is all I can do.

"I am sorry you are so worried with business; & I am still more sorry for your sprained ancle. You

* *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, i. 180-2.

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ought not to walk upon it. What is the matter between you & your good-natured maid you used to boast of? & what the devil is the matter with your Aunt? You say she is discontented. You must bear with them as well as you can; for, doubtless, it is you[r] poor Mother's teazing that puts you all out of sorts. I pity you from my heart.

"We cannot come to see you this summer, nor do I think it advisable to come & incommode you, when you for the same expence could come to us. Whenever you feel yourself disposed to run away from your troubles, come up to us again. I wish it was not such a long, expensive journey, then you could run backwards & forwards every month or two.

"I am very sorry you still hear nothing from Mr. White. I am afraid that is all at an end. What do you intend to do about Mr. Turner?

"I believe Mr. Rickman is well again, but I have not been able to get out lately to enquire, because of my toothache. Louisa Martin is quite well again.

"William Hazlitt, the brother of him you know, is in town. I believe you have heard us say we like him? He came in good time; for the loss of Manning made Charles very dull, and he likes Hazlitt better than any body, except Manning. My toothache has moped Charles to death: you know how he hates to see people ill.

"Mrs. Reynolds has been this month past at Deptford, so that I never know when Monday comes. I am glad you have got your Mother's pension.

"My *Tales* are to be published in separate story-books; I mean, in single stories, like the children's little shilling books. I cannot send you them in Manuscript, because they are all in the Godwins' hands; but one will be published very soon, & then you shall have it *all in*

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*print.* I go on very well, and have no doubt but I shall always be able to hit upon some such kind of job to keep going on. I think I shall get fifty pounds a year at the lowest calculation; but as I have not yet seen any *money* of my own earning, for we do not expect to be paid till Christmas, I do not feel the good fortune, that has so unexpectedly befallen me, half so much as I ought to do. But another year, no doubt, I shall perceive it.

"When I write again, you will hear tidings of the farce, for Charles is to go in a few days to the Managers to enquire about it. But that must now be a next-year's business too, even if it does succeed; so it's all looking forward, and no prospect of present gain. But that's better than no hopes at all, either for present or future times.

"Charles has written Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, and has begun Hamlet; you would like to see us, as we often sit writing on one table (but not on one cushion sitting), like Hermia and Helena in the Midsummer's Night's Dream; or, rather, like an old literary Darby and Joan: I taking snuff, & he groaning all the while, & saying he can make nothing of it, which he always says till he has finished, and then he finds out he has made something of it.

"If I tell you that you Widow-Blackacreise, you must tell me I Tale-ise, for my *Tales* seem to be all the subject matter I write about; and when you see them, you will think them poor little baby-stories to make such a talk about; but I have no news to send, nor nothing, in short, to say, that is worth paying two pence for. I wish I could get franks, then I should not care how short or stupidly I wrote.

"Charles smokes still, & will smoke to the end of the chapter.

"Martin [Burney] has just been here. My Tales

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(*again*) and Charles's Farce has made the boy mad to turn Author; & he has written a Farce, & he has made the Winter's Tale into a story; but what Charles says of himself is really true of Martin, for *he can make nothing at all of it:* and I have been talking very eloquently this morning, to convince him that nobody can write farces, &c., under thirty years of age. And so I suppose he will go home & new model his farce.

"What is Mr. Turner? & what is likely to come of him? and how do you like him? and what do you intend to do about it? I almost wish you to remain single till your Mother dies, & then come & live with us; and we would either get you a husband, or teach you how to live comfortably without. I think I should like to have you always to the end of our lives living with us; and I do not know any reason why that should not be, except for the great fancy you seem to have for marrying, which after all is but a hazardous kind of an affair: but, however, do as you like; every man knows best what pleases himself best.

"I have known many single men I should have liked in my life (*if it had suited them*) for a husband: but very few husbands have I ever wished was mine, which is rather against the state in general; but one never is disposed to envy wives their good husbands. So much for marrying—but however get married, if you can.

"I say we shall not come and see you, & I feel sure we shall not: but, if some sudden freak was to come into our wayward heads, could you at all manage?—Your mother we should not mind, but I think still it would be so vastly inconvenient.—I am certain we shall not come, & yet *you* may tell me, when you write, if it would be horribly inconvenient if we did; and do not tell me any lies, but say truly whether you would rather we did or not.

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"God bless you, my dearest Sarah! I wish, for your sake, I could have written a very amusing letter; but do not scold, for my head aches sadly. Don't mind my headach, for before you get this it will be well, being only from the pains of my jaws & teeth. Farewel.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB."

## LETTER X.

[July 2, 1806.]

"Charles and Hazlitt are going to Sadler's Wells, and I am amusing myself in their absence with reading a manuscript of Hazlitt's; but have laid it down to write a few lines, to tell you how we are going on. Charles has begged a month's hollidays, of which this is the first day, and they are all to be spent at home. We thank you for your kind invitations, and were half-inclined to come down to you; but after mature deliberation, and many wise consultations, such as you know we often hold, we came to the resolution of staying quietly at home: and during the hollidays we are both of us to set stoutly to work and finish the Tales, six of them being yet to do. We thought, if we went any where and left them undone, they would lay upon our minds; and that when we returned, we should feel unsettled, and our money all spent besides: and next summer we are to be very rich, and then we can afford a long journey some where, I will not say to Salisbury, because I really think it is better for you to come to us; but of that we will talk another time.

"The best news I have to send you is, that the Farce is accepted. That is to say, the manager has written to say it shall be brought out when an opportunity serves.

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I hope that it may come out by next Christmas: you must come & see it the first night; for if it succeeds, it will be a great pleasure to you, and if it should not, we shall want your consolation. So you must come.

"I shall soon have done my work, and know not what to begin next. Now, will you set your brains to work and invent a story, either for a short child's story, or a long one that would make a kind of Novel, or a Story that would make a play. Charles wants me to write a play, but I am not over anxious to set about it, but seriously will you draw me out a skeleton of a story, either from memory of any thing that you have read, or from your own invention, and I will fill it up in some way or other.

"The reason I have not written so long is, that I worked, and worked, in hopes to get through my task before the hollidays began; but at last I was not able, for Charles was forced to get them now, or he could not have had any at all: and having picked out the best stories first, these latter ones take more time, being more perplext and unmanageable. But however I hope soon to tell you that they are quite completed. I have finished one to-day which teazed me more than all the rest put together. The[y] sometimes plague me as bad as your *Lovers* do you. How do you go on, and how many new ones have you had lately?

"I met Mrs. Fenwick at Mrs. Holcroft's the other day; she loo[ked very] placid and smiling, but I was so disconcerted that I hardly knew how to sit upon my chair. She invited us to come and see her, but we did not invite her in return; and nothing at all was said in an explanatory sort: so that matter rests at present.

"Mrs. Rickman continues very ill—so ill, that there

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are no hopes of her recovery—for which I am very sorry indeed.

"I am sorry you are altogether so uncomfortable; I shall be glad to hear you are settled at Salisbury: that must be better than living in a lone house, companionless as you are. I wish you could afford to bring your Mother up to London; but that is quite impossible.

"Your brother wrote a letter a week ago (which passed through our hands) to Wordsworth, to tell him all he knew of Coleridge; but as he had not heard from C. for some time, there was nothing in the letter we did not know before.

"Thanks for your brother's letters. I preserve them very carefully, and you shall have them (as the Manager says) when opportunity serves.

"Mrs. Wordsworth is brought to bed; and I ought to write to Miss Wordsworth to thank her for the information, but I suppose I shall defer it till another child is coming. I do so hate writing letters. I wish all my friends would come and live in town. Charles has been telling me even it is better [than] two months that he ought to write to your brother.* [It is not] my dislike to writing letters that prevents my [writing] to you, but sheer want of time, I assure you, because [I know] you care not how stupidly I write, so as you do but [hear at the] time what we are about.

"Let me hear from you soon, and do let me hear some [good news,] and don't let me hear of your walking with sprained ancles again; no business is an excuse for making yourself lame.

"I hope your poor Mother is better, and Aunty and Maid jog on pretty well; remember me to them all in due form and order. Charles's love, and our best wishes

* The seal being torn, many words are missing.

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that all your little busy affairs may come to a prosperous conclusion.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Friday evening.

"They (Hazlitt & Charles) came home from Sadler's Wells so dismal & dreary dull on Friday, that I gave them both a good scolding—*quite a setting to rights;* and I think it has done some good, for Charles has been very chearful ever since. I begin to hope the *home hollidays* will go on very well. Mrs. Rickman is better. Rickman we saw at Captain Burney's for the first time since her illness last night.

"Write directly, for I am uneasy about your *Lovers;* I wish something was settled. God bless you.

"Once more, yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"*Sunday morning.*—I did not put this in the post, hoping to be able to write a less dull letter to you this morning; but I have been prevented, so it shall go as it is. I am in good spirits just at this present time, for Charles has been reading over the *Tale* I told you plagued me so much, and he thinks it one of the very best: it is All's Well that Ends Well. You must not mind the many wretchedly dull letters I have sent you; for, indeed, I cannot help it, my mind is so *dry* always after poring over my work all day. But it will soon be over.

"I am cooking a shoulder of Lamb (Hazlitt dines with us); it will be ready at two o'Clock, if you can pop in and eat a bit with us."

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## Letter XI.

[October 22, 1807.]

"My dear Sarah,

"I thank you a thousand times for the beautiful work you have sent me. I received the parcel from a strange gentleman yesterday. I like the patterns very much. You have quite set me up in finery. But you should have sent the silk handkerchief too: will you make a parcel of that, and send it by the Salisbury coach? I should like to have it in a few days, because we have not yet been to Mr. Babb's, and that handkerchief would suit this time of year nicely.

"I have received a long letter from your brother on the subject of your intended marriage. I have no doubt but you also have one on this business; therefore it is needless to repeat what he says. I am well pleased to find that, upon the whole, he does not seem to see it in an unfavourable light. He says that, if Mr. D[owling] is a worthy man, he shall have no objection to become the brother of a farmer; and he makes an odd request to me, that I shall set out to Salisbury to look at and examine into the merits of the said Mr. D.; and speaks very confidently, as if you would abide by my determination. A pretty sort of an office, truly! Shall I come?

"The objections he starts are only such as you & I have already talked over—such as the difference in age, education, habits of life, &c.

"You have gone too far in this affair for any interference to be at all desirable; and, if you had not, I really do not know what my wishes would be. When you bring Mr. Dowling at Christmas, I suppose it will be quite time enough for me to sit in judgment upon him; but my examination will not be a very severe one. If

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you fancy a very young man, and he likes an elderly gentlewoman, if he likes a learned & accomplished lady, and you like a not very learned youth, who may need a little polishing, which probably he will never acquire; it is all very well, & God bless you both together, & may you be both very long in the same mind!

"I am to assist you, too, your brother says, in drawing up the Marriage settlements, another thankful office! I am not, it seems, to suffer you to keep too much money in your own power, and yet I am to take care of you in case of bankruptcy, &c.; and I am to recommend to you, for the better management of this point, the serious perusal of *Jeremy Taylor* his opinion on the marriage state, especially his advice against *separate interests* in that happy state; and I am also to tell you how desirable it is that the husband should have the intire direction of all money concerns, except, as your good brother adds, in the case of his own family, where the money, he observes, is very properly deposited in Mrs. Stoddart's hands, she being better suited to enjoy such a trust than any other woman; and, therefore, it is fit that the general rule should not be extended to her.

"We will talk over these things when you come to town, and as to settlements, which are matters of which I, I never having had a penny in my own disposal, never in my life thought of; and, if I had been blessed with a good fortune, and that marvellous blessing to boot, a husband, I verily believe I should have crammed it all uncounted into his pocket. But thou hast a cooler head of thy own, & I dare say will do exactly what is expedient and proper; but your brother's opinion seems somewhat like Mr. Barwis's, & I dare say you will take it into due consideration: yet perhaps an offer of your own money to take a farm may make *uncle* do less for his nephew, & in that case Mr. D. might be a

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loser by your generosity—weigh all these things well; and, if you can so contrive it, let your brother *settle* the *settlements* himself when he returns, which will most probably be long before you want them.

"You are settled, it seems, in the very house which your brother most dislikes. If you find this house very inconvenient, get out of it as fast as you can; for your brother says he sent you the fifty pound to make you comfortable; and by the general tone of his letter I am sure he wishes to make you easy in money matters: therefore, why straiten yourself to pay the debt you owe him, which I am well assured he never means to take? Thank you for the letter, and for the picture of pretty little chubby nephew John.

"I have been busy makeing waiskoats, and plotting new work to succeed the Tales; as yet I have not hit upon any thing to my mind.

"Charles took an emendated copy of his farce to Mr. Wroughton the Manager yesterday. Mr. Wroughton was very friendly to him, and expressed high approbation of the farce; but there are two, he tells him, to come out before it; yet he gave him hopes that it will come out this season: but I am afraid you will not see it by Christmas. It will do for another jaunt for you in the spring. We are pretty well, & in fresh spirits about this farce. Charles has been very good lately in the matter of *Smoking*.

"When you come, bring the gown you wish to sell. Mrs. Coleridge will be in town then; & if she happens not to fancy it, perhaps some other person may.

"Coleridge, I believe, is gone home: he left us with that design; but we have not heard from him this fortnight.

"Louisa sends her love; she has been very unwell lately.

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"My respects to Coridon, Mother, and Aunty. Farewel. My best wishes are with you.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Thursday.

"When I saw what a prodigious quantity of work you had put into the finery, I was quite ashamed of my unreasonable request. I will never serve you so again; but I do dearly love worked muslin."

The next has no date (as usual), and the post-mark is almost obliterated. So far as I can make it out, the date is the 21st December, 1807:

## LETTER XII.

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I have deferred answering your last letter, in hopes of being able to give you some intelligence that might be useful to you; for I every day expected that Hazlitt or you would communicate the affair to your brother; but, as the Doctor is silent upon the subject, I conclude he yet knows nothing of the matter. You desire my advice; and therefore I tell you I think you ought to tell your brother as soon as possible; for, at present, he is on very friendly visiting terms with Hazlitt, and, if he is not offended by a too long concealment, will do every thing in his power to serve you. If you chuse that I should tell him, I will; but I think it would come better from you. If you can persuade Hazlitt to mention it, that would be still better; for I know your brother would be unwilling to give credit to you, because you deceived yourself in regard to Corydon. Hazlitt, I know, is shy of

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speaking first; but I think it of such great importance to you to have your brother friendly in the business, that, if you can overcome his reluctance, it would be a great point gained. For you must begin the world with ready money—at least an hundred pound; for, if you once go into furnished lodgings, you will never be able to lay by money to buy furniture.

"If you obtain your brother's approbation, he might assist you, either by lending or otherwise. I have a great opinion of his generosity, where he thinks it would be useful.

"Hazlitt's brother is mightily pleased with the match; but he says you must have furniture, and be clear in the world at first setting out, or you will be always behindhand. He also said he would give you what furniture he could spare. I am afraid you can bring but few things away from your own house. What a pity that you have laid out so much money on your cottage!—that money would have just done. I most heartily congratulate you on having so well got over your first difficulties; and, now that it is quite settled, let us have no more fears. I now mean not only to hope & wish, but to persuade myself, that you will be very happy together.

"Endeavour to keep your mind as easy as you can. You ought to begin the world with a good stock of health & spirits: it is quite as necessary as ready money at first setting out. Do not teize yourself about coming to town. When your brother learns how things are going on, we shall consult him about meetings & so forth; but, at present, any hasty step of that kind would not answer, I know. If Hazlitt were to go down to Salisbury, or you were to come up here, without consulting your brother, you know it would never do.

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"Charles is just come in to dinner; he desires his love and best wishes.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Monday morning."

## LETTER XIII.

[No date; but indorsed October, 1807.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I am two letters in your debt; but it has not been so much from idleness, as a wish first to see how your comical love affair would turn out. You know, I make a pretence not to interfere; but like all old maids I feel a mighty solicitude about the event of love stories. I learn from the Lover* that he has not been so remiss in his duty as you supposed. His Effusion, and your complaints of his inconstancy, crossed each other on the road. He tells me his was a very strange letter, and that probably it has affronted you. That it was a strange letter I can readily believe; but that you were affronted by a strange letter is not so easy for me to conceive, that not being your way of taking things. But however it be, let some answer come, either to him, or else to me, showing cause why you do not answer him. And pray, by all means, preserve the said letter, that I may one day have the pleasure of seeing how Mr. Hazlitt treats of love.†

"I was at your brother's on Thursday. Mrs. S. tells me she has not written, because she does not like to put you to the expense of postage. They are very well. Little Missy thrives amazingly. Mrs. Stoddart conjectures she is in the family way again; and those kind of con-

* William Hazlitt.

† Compare *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, i. 153.

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jectures generally prove too true. Your other sister-in-law, Mrs. Hazlitt, was brought to bed last week of a boy: so that you are likely to have plenty of nephews and nieces.

"Yesterday evening we were at Rickman's; and who should we find there but Hazlitt; though, if you do not know it was his first invitation there, it will not surprise you as much as it did us. We were very much pleased, because we dearly love our friends to be respected by our friends.

"The most remarkable events of the evening were, that we had a very fine pine-apple; that Mr. Phillips,* Mr. Lamb, and Mr. Hazlitt played at Cribbage in the most polite and gentlemanly manner possible—and that I won two rubbers at whist.

"I am glad Aunty left you some business to do. Our compliments to her and your Mother. Is it as cold at Winterslow as it is here? How do the Lions go on? I am better, and Charles is tolerably well. Godwin's new Tragedy† will probably be damned the latter end of next week. Charles has written the Prologue. Prologues and Epilogues will be his death. If you know the extent of Mrs. Reynolds's poverty, you will be glad to hear Mr. Norris has got ten pounds a year for her from the Temple Society. She will be able to make out pretty well now.

"Farewell—Determine as wisely as you can in

* Colonel Phillips, of the Marines, one of the Wednesday-men, and, as it was half-suspected at the time, a government spy. He lived to a very great age. As a young man, he accompanied the expedition in which Captain Cook perished; and it was Phillips who shot the savage who had given Cook his death-blow.

† *Antonio*—to which Lamb wrote the prologue, as here stated. Miss Lamb's prediction was verified, though the author was confident of success. Hazlitt thought that this sanguineness was ominous of the actual result.

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regard to Hazlitt; and, if your determination is to have him, Heaven send you many happy years together. If I am not mistaken, I have concluded letters on the Corydon Courtship with this same wish. I hope it is not ominous of change; for if I were sure you would not be quite starved to death, nor beaten to a mummy, I should like to see Hazlitt and you come together, if (as Charles observes) it were only for the joke sake.

"Write instantly to me.

"Yours most affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Saturday morning.

"Miss Stoddart, Winterslow, Salisbury."

## LETTER XIV.

[February 12, 1808.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I have sent your letter & drawing* off to Wem (Hazlitt's father's), in Shropshire, where I conjecture Hazlitt is. He left town on Saturday afternoon, without telling us where he was going. He seemed very impatient at not hearing from you. He was very ill, and I suppose is gone home to his father's to be nursed.

"I find Hazlitt has mentioned to you the intention which we had of asking you up to town, which we were bent on doing; but, having named it since to your brother, the Doctor† expressed a strong desire that you should not come to town to be at any other house than his own, for he said that it would have a very strange appearance.

* A sketch of Middleton Cottage, Winterslow, where Miss S. resided.

† Dr. Stoddart.



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"His wife's father* is coming to be with them till near the end of April, after which time he shall have full room for you. And if you are to be married, he wishes that you should be married, with all the proper decorums, *from his house.* Now, though we should be most willing to run any hazards of disobliging him, if there were no other means of your & Hazlitt's meeting, yet, as he seems so friendly to the match, it would not be worth while to alienate him from you and ourselves too, for the slight accommodation which the difference of a few weeks would make, provided always, and be it understood, that if you and H. make up your minds to be married before the time in which you can be at your brother's, our house stands open and most ready, at a moment's notice, to receive you. Only, we would not quarrel unnecessarily with your brother. Let there be a clear necessity shown, and we will quarrel with any body's brother.

"Now, though I have written to the above effect, I hope you will not conceive but that both my brother & I had looked forward to your coming with unmixed pleasure, and are really disappointed at your brother's declaration; for, next to the pleasure of being married, is the pleasure of making or helping marriages forward.

"We wish to hear from you that you do not take our *seeming change* of purpose in ill part, for it is but *seeming* on our part; for it was my brother's suggestion, by him first mentioned to Hazlitt, and cordially approved by me; but your brother has set his face against it, and it is better to take him along with us in our plans, if he will good-naturedly go along with us, than not.

"The reason I have not written lately has been, that I thought it better to leave you all to the workings of your own minds in this momentous affair, in which the

* The Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff, Bart.

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inclinations of a bye-stander have a right to form a wish, but not to give a vote.

"Being, with the help of wide lines, at the end of my last page, I conclude with our kind wishes, and prayers for the best.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"His direction is (if he is there) at Wem, in Shropshire. I suppose, as letters must come to London first, you had better inclose them, while he is there, for my brother in London.

[Indorsement:]
"Miss Stoddart, Winterslow, near Salisbury, Wilts."

So Miss Stoddart was engaged to William Hazlitt, and the marriage is fixed for the spring of 1808. The Lambs are to be there. Nay, more—Miss Lamb is to be bridesmaid! This leads to a grand paper-discussion upon what she is to wear on the occasion; and a letter of March 16, 1808, is full of nothing else:

## LETTER XV.

[March 16, 1808.]

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"Do not be very angry that I have not written to you. I have promised your brother to be at your wedding, and that favour you must accept as an atonement for my offences. You have been in no want of correspondence lately, and I wished to leave you both to your own inventions.

"The border you are working for me I prize at a very high rate, because I consider it as the last work you can do for me, the time so fast approaching that you

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must no longer work for your friends. Yet my old fault of giving away presents has not left me, and I am desirous of even giving away this your last gift. I had intended to have given it away without your knowledge, but I have intrusted my secret to Hazlitt, and I suppose it will not remain a secret long, so I condescend to consult you.

"It is to Miss Hazlitt,* to whose superior claim I wish to give up my right to this precious worked border. Her brother William is her great favorite, and she would be pleased to possess his bride's last work. Are you not to give the fellow-border to one sister-in-law, and therefore has she not a just claim to it? I never heard, in the annals of weddings (since the days of Nausicaa,† and she only washed her old gowns for that purpose), that the brides ever furnished the apparel of their maids. Besides, I can be completely clad in your work without it; for the spotted muslin will serve both for cap & hat (Nota bene, my hat is the same as yours), and the gown you sprigged for me has never been made up, therefore I can wear that—Or, if you like better, I will make up a new silk which Manning‡ has sent me from China. Manning would like to hear I wore it for the first time at your wedding. It is a very pretty light colour, but there is an objection (besides not being your work, and that is a very serious objection), and that is, Mrs. Hazlitt§ tells me that all Winterslow would be in an uproar if the bridesmaid was to be dressed in any

* Peggy Hazlitt, only daughter of the Rev. W. Hazlitt, A.M.

† See the *Adventures of Ulysses*, 1808, cap. vi.

‡ Thomas Manning, Esq., a mathematical tutor at Cambridge, and a most intimate friend and valued correspondent of Lamb. He had lately gone out to China, for curiosity more than from any settled motive.

§ Mrs. John Hazlitt, wife of the miniature-painter. She was a Miss Pearce, of Portsea.

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thing but white; and, although it is a very light colour, I confess we cannot call it white, being a sort of a dead-whiteish-bloom colour. Then silk, perhaps, in a morning, is not so proper, though the occasion, so joyful, might justify a full dress. Determine for me in this perplexity between the sprig and the China-Manning silk. But do not contradict my whim about Miss Hazlitt having the border, for I have set my heart upon the matter. If you agree with me in this, I shall think you have forgiven me for giving away your pin—that was a *mad* trick; but I had many obligations, and no money. I repent me of the deed, wishing I had it now to send to Miss H. with the border; & I cannot, will not, give her the Doctor's pin, for, having never had any presents from gentlemen in my young days, I highly prize all they now give me, thinking my latter days are better than my former.

"You must send this same border in your own name to Miss Hazlitt, which will save me the disgrace of giving away your gift, and make it amount merely to a civil refusal.

"I shall have no present to give you on your marriage, nor do I expect I shall be rich enough to give any thing to baby at the first christening; but at the second or third child's, I hope to have a coral or so to spare out of my own earnings. Do not ask me to be Godmother, for I have an objection to that—but there is, I believe, no serious duties attached to a bride's maid, therefore I come with a willing mind, bringing nothing with me but many wishes, and not a few hopes, and a very little fear—of happy years to come.

"I am, dear Sarah,

"Yours ever most affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

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"What has Charles done, that nobody invites him to the wedding?

"Miss Stoddart, Winterslow, near Salisbury."

Miss Stoddart became Mrs. Hazlitt on the 1st of May, 1808; and after this date the letters become less frequent, and, which is more, of less consequence to our present object. We are merely dealing with unpublished details or little-known facts in the history of the Lambs. We have already emerged from the very obscure period in the lives of the brother and sister; for, after 1808, we begin to obtain light from other sources. At first, however, that light shines weakly.

In 1809, the Lambs, with Martin Burney and Colonel Phillips, visited Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt at Winterslow. This journey down into Wiltshire, let it be recollected, had been talked of for a very long time indeed; there are even glimpses of the Lambs' intention to turn their steps in that direction in one of Charles's holidays in 1806, two years before Miss Stoddart's union with Hazlitt.

A letter of December 10, 1808, has already been published; and my sole reason for inserting it here is, that I desire to see presented to the public in as complete a shape as possible the correspondence between Miss Lamb and the most intimate of her friends:

## Letter XVI.

[Dec. 10, 1808.]

"My dear Sarah,

"I hear of you from your brother; but you do not write yourself, nor does Hazlitt. I beg that one or both of you will amend this fault as speedily as possible, for I am very anxious to hear of your health. I hope,

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as you say nothing about your fall to your brother, you are perfectly recovered from the effects of it.

"You cannot think how very much we miss you and H. of a Wednesday evening. All the glory of the night, I may say, is at an end. Phillips makes his jokes, and there is no one to applaud him; Rickman argues, and there is no one to oppose him.

"The worst miss of all to me is, that, when we are in the dismals, there is now no hope of relief from any quarter whatsoever. Hazlitt was most brilliant, most ornamental, as a Wednesday-man; but he was a more useful one on common days, when he dropt in after a quarrel or a fit of the glooms. The Sheffington is quite out now, my brother having got drunk with claret & Tom Sheridan. This visit, and the occasion of it, is a profound secret, & therefore I tell it to nobody but you & Mrs. Reynolds. Through the medium of Wroughton, there came an invitation and proposal from T. S., that C. L. should write some scenes in a speaking Pantomime, the other parts of which Tom now, and his father formerly, have manufactured between them. So, in the Christmas holydays, my brother and his two great associates, we expect, will be all three damned together, that is, I mean, if Charles's share, which is done and sent in, is accepted.

"I left this unfinished yesterday, in the hope that my brother would have done it for me: his reason for refusing me was 'no exquisite reason;' for it was, because he must write a letter to Manning in three or four weeks, and therefore he could not be always writing letters, he said. I wanted him to tell your husband about a great work which Godwin is going to publish, to enlighten the world once more, and I shall not be able to make out what it is. He (Godwin) took his usual walk one evening, a fortnight since, to the end of Hatton Garden & back

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again. During that walk, a thought came into his mind, which he instantly set down and improved upon, till he brought it, in seven or eight days, into the compass of a reasonable sized pamphlet. To propose a subscription to all well disposed people, to raise a certain sum of money, to be expended in the care of a cheap monument for the former & the future great dead men,—the monument to be a white cross, with a wooden slab at the end, telling their names & qualifications. This wooden slab & white cross to be perpetuated to the end of time. To survive the fall of empires & the destruction of cities by means of a map, which was, in case of an insurrection among the people, or any other cause by which a city or country may be destroyed, to be carefully preserved; & then, when things got again into their usual order, the white-cross-wooden-slab-makers were to go to work again, and set them in their former places. This, as nearly as I can tell you, is the sum & substance of it, but it is written remarkably well, in his very best manner; for the proposal (which seems to me very like throwing salt on a sparrow's tail to catch him) occupies but half a page, which is followed by very fine writing on the benefits he conjectures would follow if it were done. Very excellent thoughts on death, and on our feelings concerning dead friends, and the advantages an old country has over a new one, even in the slender memorials we have of great men who once flourished.

"Charles is come home, & wants his dinner; and so the dead men must be no more thought on:* tell us how you go on, and how you like Winterslow and winter evenings.

"Noales [Knowles] has not got back again, but

* This humorous description refers to Godwin's *Essay on Sepulchres*, published in 1809.

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he is in better spirits. John Hazlitt was here on Wednesday, very sober.

"Our love to Hazlitt.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Saturday."

"There came this morning a printed prospectus from S. T. Coleridge, Grasmere, of a weekly paper, to be called The Friend—a flaming Prospectus—I have no time to give the heads of it—to commence first Saturday in January. There came also a notice of a Turkey from Mr. Clarkson, which I am more sanguine in expecting the accomplishment of than I am of Coleridge's prophecy.

"C. LAMB."

An event to which Miss Lamb was, no doubt, looking forward with some interest, occurred on Sunday afternoon, January 15, 1809, at a quarter past four o'clock: her old friend, Mrs. Hazlitt, was safely confined of a son; and the parents agreed to call him William. The little fellow only lived, however, till the 5th of July in the same year, and was buried on the evening of the 9th, at St. Martin's Churchyard, Salisbury, in the grave of his grandfather Stoddart.

Against this blow the Hazlitts had to set the prospect of seeing the Lambs, and Martin Burney, and Colonel Phillips, down at Winterslow on a visit of a few weeks. Lamb had made up his mind to spend his holidays with them.

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## Letter XVII.

[June 2, 1809.]

"'You may write to Hazlitt, that I will *certainly* go to Winterslough, as my Father has agreed to give me 5*l.* to bear my expences, and has given leave that I may stop till that is spent, leaving enough to defray my Carriage on the 14th July.'

"So far Martin* has written, and further than that I can give you no intelligence, for I do not yet know Phillips's intentions; nor can I tell you the exact time when we can come; nor can I positively say we shall come at all; for we have scruples of conscience about there being so many of us.

"Martin says, if you can borrow a blanket or two, he can sleep on the floor, without either bed or mattress, which would save his expences at the Hut; for, if Phillips breakfasts there, he must do so too, which would swallow up all his money. And he and I have calculated that, if he has no Inn expences, he may as well spare that money to give you for a part of his roast beef.

"We can spare you also just five pounds. You are not to say this to Hazlitt, lest his delicacy should be alarmed; but I tell you what Martin and I have planned, that, if you happen to be empty pursed at this time, you may think it as well to make him up a bed in the best kitchen.

"I think it very probable that Phillips will come; and, if you do not like such a croud of us, for they both talk of staying a whole month, tell me so, and we will put off our visit till next summer.

"The 14th July is the day Martin has fixed for *coming*. I should have written before, if I could have got a positive answer from them.

* Of course, Martin Burney.

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"Thank you very much for the good work you have done for me. Mrs. Stoddart also thanks you for the gloves. How often must I tell you never to do any needle work for any body but me?

"Martin Burney has been very ill, and still is very weak & pale. Mrs. Holcroft* and all her children, and all her scholars, have had the measles. Your old friend, Mrs. Fenwick, is in town.

"We are going to see Mrs. Martin and her daughter, Mrs. Fulton (Sarah Martin), and I expect to see there the future husband of Louisa.† It will be a charming evening, doubtless.

"I cannot write any more, for we have got a noble Life of Lord Nelson lent us for a short time by my poor relation the book binder, and I want to read as much of it as I can.

"Yours affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"On reading Martin's note over again, we guess the Captain means him to stay only a fortnight. It is most likely we shall come the beginning of July.

"Saturday."

Could "my poor relation the bookbinder," who supplied the "noble" Life of Nelson, be the person out of whom C. L. got the first inkling of that essay "On Poor Relations"?

The Lambs, Burney, and Phillips, went down accordingly, and enjoyed themselves very much at Winterslow; on their return, Miss Lamb sat down to write a letter

* Wife of Thomas Holcroft, the dramatist.

† The young lady who figures in one or two of Lamb's letters under the playful *sobriquet* of "Monkey."

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of pleasant recollections and home-gossip. What a fine touch is that where Miss Lamb says: "I did not so much like Phillips at Winterslow, as I now like him for having been with us at Winterslow"!

## Letter XVIII.

[Nov. 7, 1809.]

"My dear Sarah,

"The dear, quiet, lazy, delicious month we spent with you is remembered by me with such regret, that I feel quite discontent & Winterslow-sick. I assure you, I never passed such a pleasant time in the country in my life, both in the house & out of it, the card playing quarrels, and a few gaspings for breath after your swift footsteps up the high hills excepted, and those drawbacks are not unpleasant in the recollection. We have got some salt butter to make our toast seem like yours, and we have tried to eat meat suppers, but that would not do, for we left our appetites behind us; and the dry loaf, which offended you, now comes in at night unaccompanied; but, sorry am I to add, it is soon followed by the pipe and the gin bottle. We smoked the very first night of our arrival.

"Great news! I have just been interrupted by Mr. Daw[e]; who comes to tell me he was yesterday elected a Royal Academician. He said none of his own friends voted for him; he got it by strangers, who were pleased with his picture of Mrs. White. Charles says he does not believe Northcote ever voted for the admission of any one. Though a very cold day, Daw[e] was in a prodigious sweat, for joy at his good fortune.

"More great news! my beautiful green curtains were put up yesterday, and all the doors listed with green baize, and four new boards put to the coal hole,

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and fastening hasps put to the window, and my died Manning silk cut out.

"Yesterday was an eventful day: for yesterday too Martin Burney was to be examined by Lord Eldon, previous to his being admitted as an Attorney; but he has not yet been here to announce his success.

"I carried the baby-caps to Mrs. [John] Hazlitt; she was much pleased, and vastly thankful. Mr. [John] H. got fifty-four guineas at Rochester, and has now several pictures in hand.

"I am going to tell you a secret, for —— says she would be sorry to have it talked of. One night —— came home from the ale-house, bringing with him a great, rough, ill-looking fellow, whom he introduced to —— as Mr. Brown, a gentleman he had hired as a mad keeper, to take care of him, at forty pounds a year, being ten pounds under the usual price for keepers, which sum Mr. Brown had agreed to remit out of pure friendship. It was with great difficulty, and by threatening to call in the aid of watchmen and constables, that —— could prevail on Mr. Brown to leave the house.

"We had a good, chearful meeting on Wednesday: much talk of Winterslow, its woods, & its nice sun flowers. I did not so much like Phillips at Winterslow, as I now like him for having been with us at Winterslow. We roasted the last of his 'beach, of oily nut prolific,' on Friday, at the Captain's. Nurse is now established in Paradise, *alias* the Incurable Ward [of Westminster Hospital]. I have seen her sitting in most superb state, surrounded by her seven incurable companions. They call each other ladies. Nurse looks as if she would be considered as the first lady in the ward: only one seemed at [all] like to rival her in dignity.

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"A man in the India House has resigned, by which Charles will get twenty pounds a year; and White has prevailed on him to write some more lottery-puffs. If that ends in smoke, the twenty pounds is a sure card, and has made us very joyful.

"I continue very well, & return you very sincere thanks for my good health and improved looks, which have almost made Mrs. Godwin die with envy; she longs to come to Winterslow as much as the spiteful elder sister did to go to the well for a gift to spit diamonds—

"Jane and I have agreed to boil a round of beef for your suppers, when you come to town again. She, Jane, broke two of the Hogarth glasses while we were away—whereat I made a great noise.

"Farewel. Love to William, and Charles's love and good wishes for the speedy arrival of the Life of Holcroft, & the bearer thereof.

"Yours most affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"Tuesday.

"Charles told Mrs. Godwin, Hazlitt had found a well in his garden, which, water being scarce in your country, would bring him in two hundred a year; and she came in great haste the next morning to ask me if it were true. Your brother and his &c. are all well.

"Mrs. Hazlitt, Winterslow, near Salisbury."

Mrs. Hazlitt, in the next communication which Miss Lamb received from her, announced her intention of coming up, and this is Miss Lamb's reply:

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## Letter XIX.

[Nov. 30, 1810.]

"My dear Sarah,

"I have taken a large sheet of paper, as if I were going to write a long letter; but that is by no means my intention, for I only have time to write three lines to notify what I ought to have done the moment I received your welcome letter. Namely, that I shall be very much joyed to see you. Every morning lately I have been expecting to see you drop in, even before your letter came; and I have been setting my wits to work to think how to make you as comfortable as the nature of our inhospitable habits will admit. I must work while you are here; and I have been slaving very hard to get through with something before you come, that I may be quite in the way of it, and not teize you with complaints all day that I do not know what to do.

"I am very sorry to hear of your mischance. Mrs. Rickman has just buried her youngest child. I am glad I am an old maid; for, you see, there is nothing but misfortunes in the marriage state.

"Charles was drunk last night, and drunk the night before; which night before was at Godwin's, where we went, at a short summons from Mr. G., to play a solitary rubber, which was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. & little Mrs. Liston; and after them came Henry Robinson, who is now domesticated at Mr. Godwin's fireside, & likely to become a formidable rival to Tommy Turner. We finished there at twelve o'clock (Charles and Liston brim-full of gin & water & snuff): after which, Henry Robinson spent a long evening by our fireside at home; and there was much gin & water drunk, albeit only one of the party partook of it. And

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H. R. professed himself highly indebted to Charles for the useful information he gave him on sundry matters of taste and imagination, even after Charles could not speak plain for tipsiness. But still he swallowed the flattery and the spirits as savourily as Robinson did his cold water.

"Last night was to be a night, but it was not. There was a certain son of one of Martin's employers, one young Mr. Blake; to do whom honour, Mrs. Burney brought forth, first rum, then a single bottle of champaine, long kept in her secret hoard; then two bottles of her best currant wine, which she keeps for Mrs. Rickman, came out; & Charles partook liberally of all these beverages, while Mr. Young Blake & Mr. Ireton talked of high matters, such as the merits of the Whip Club, & the merits of red & white champaine. Do I spell that last word right? Rickman was not there, so Ireton had it all his own way.

"The alternating Wednesdays will chop off one day in the week from your jolly days, and I do not know how we shall make it up to you; but I will contrive the best I can. Phillips comes again pretty regularly, to the great joy of Mrs. Reynolds. Once more she hears the well-loved sounds of, 'How do you do, Mrs. Reynolds? How does Miss Chambers do?'

"I have spun out my three lines amazingly. Now for family news. Your brother's little twins are not dead, but Mrs. John Hazlitt & her baby may be, for any thing I know to the contrary, for I have not been there for a prodigious long time. Mrs. Holcroft still goes about from Nicholson to Tuthil, & from Tuthil to Godwin, & from Godwin to Tuthil, & from Tuthil to Nicholson, to consult on the publication, or no publication, of the life of the good man, her husband. It is called the Life Everlasting. How does that same Life

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go on in your parts? Good bye, God bless you. I shall be glad to see you when you come this way.

"Yours most affectionately,

"M. LAMB.

"I am going in great haste to see Mrs. Clarkson, for I must get back to dinner, which I have hardly time to do. I wish that dear, good, amiable woman would go out of town. I thought she was clean gone; & yesterday there was a consultation of physicians held at her house, to see if they could keep her among them here a few weeks longer."

After two misadventures in 1810, Miss Lamb's correspondent at length presented her husband with a son, who was destined to live. Hazlitt communicated the intelligence to Lamb, directing to the India House; and here is Miss Lamb's congratulatory reply. Her brother wrote to Hazlitt on the same sheet of paper.

## LETTER XX.

"2 Oct., 1811.
"Temple.

"MY DEAR SARAH,

"I have been a long time anxiously expecting the happy news that I have just received. I address you because, as the letter has been lying some days at the India House, I hope you are able to sit up and read my congratulations on the little live boy* you have been so many years wishing for. As we old women say, 'May he live to be a great comfort to you!' I never knew an event of the kind that gave me so much pleasure

* My father; born at Winterslow, Sept. 26, 1811.



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as the little long-looked-for-come-at-last's arrival; and I rejoice to hear his honour has begun to suck. The word was not distinctly written, and I was a long time making out the solemn fact. I hope to hear from you soon, for I am anxious to know if your nursing labours are attended with any difficulties. I wish you a happy *getting-up*, and a merry christening.

"Charles sends his love; perhaps, though, he will write a scrap to Hazlitt* at the end. He is now looking over me. He is always in my way, for he has had a month's holydays at home; but I am happy to say they end on Monday, when mine begin, for I am going to pass a week at Richmond with Mrs. Burney. She has been dying, but she went to the Isle of Wight, & recovered once more; and she is finishing her recovery at Richmond. When there, I intend to read Novels & play at Piquet all day long.

"Yours truly,

"M. LAMB.

[Indorsed:]
"Mrs. Hazlitt, Winterslow, near Sarum, Wilts."

## LETTER XXI.

[August 9, 1827.]

*Miss Lamb to Lady Stoddart.*†

"MY DEAR LADY-FRIEND,

"My brother called at our empty cottage yesterday, and found the cards of your son and his friend, Mr. Hine, under the door; which has brought to my mind that I am in danger of losing this post, as I did the last,

* See *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, 1867, i. 187, where Lamb's "scrap" will be found.

† Although this letter, which closes the Lamb-Stoddart series, does not in strictness belong to it, it seemed, for one or two reasons, better to include it.

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being at that time in a confused state of mind—for at that time we were talking of leaving, and persuading ourselves that we were intending to leave town and all our friends, and sit down for ever, solitary and forgotten, here. Here we are;* and we have locked up our house, & left it to take care of itself; but at present we do not design to extend our rural life beyond Michaelmas. Your kind letter was most welcome to me, though the good news contained in it was already known to me. Accept my warmest congratulations, though they come a little of the latest. In my next I may probably have to hail you grandmama; or to felicitate you on the nuptials of pretty Mary,† who, whatever the beaux of Malta may think of her, I can only remember her round shining face, and her 'O William!'—'dear William!' when we visited her the other day at school. Present my love and best wishes—a long and happy married life to dear Isabella—I love to call her Isabella; but in truth, having left your other letter in town, I recollect no other name she has.

"The same love and the same wishes—in future—to my friend Mary. Tell her that her 'dear William' grows taller, and improves in manly looks and manlike behaviour every time I see him.‡ What is Henry§ about? and

* At Enfield.

† Who afterwards married Major Whitmore, R.E., whose name is honourably associated with the fortifications at Sheerness. He was the son of Sir George Whitmore, and is the "dear William" above mentioned.

‡ I do not exactly know what Miss Lamb's idea of *manly looks* may have been; but I well recollect that my mother told me how, when she went first to call on Mrs. Whitmore, and Major (then Captain) W. came into the room, his appearance (it was dusk) struck her as so Liliputian, that she had it on her lips to say, "Is that your little boy, Mrs. Whitmore?"

§ Henry Stoddart, one of the sons of Sir John Stoddart, Chief-Justice of Malta. He died young.

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what should one wish for him? If he be in search of a wife, I will send him out Emma Isola.*

"You remember Emma, that you were so kind as to invite to your ball? She is now with us; and I am moving heaven and earth, that is to say, I am pressing the matter upon all the very few friends I have that are likely to assist me in such a case, to get her into a family as a governess; and Charles and I do little else here than teach her something or other all day long.

"We are striving to put enough Latin into her to enable her to begin to teach it to young learners. So much for Emma—for you are so fearfully far away, that I fear it is useless to implore your patronage for her.

"I have not heard from Mrs. Hazlitt a long time. I believe she is still with Hazlitt's mother in Devonshire.

"I expect a pacquet of manuscript† from you: you promised me the office of negotiating with booksellers, and so forth, for your next work. Is it in good forwardness? or do you grow rich and indolent now? It is not surprising that your Maltese story should find its way into Malta; but I was highly pleased with the idea of your pleasant surprise at the sight of it. I took a large sheet of paper, in order to leave Charles room to add something more worth reading than my poor mite.‡

"May we all meet again once more!

"M. Lamb."

* Who afterwards married Mr. Moxon of Dover Street, the poet-publisher.

† I have in my possession three unpublished novels by Lady S., with corrections throughout in the hand of Lamb himself. Lady Stoddart published several tales, under the *nom de plume* of "M. Blackford," between 1823 and 1850. She owed to Miss Lamb her earliest encouragement to cultivate the literary taste and capacity which she undoubtedly possessed in no mean degree.

‡ See Inedited Remains of C. L., *post*.

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The "little Barbara" (afterwards Mrs. Edwards) to whom the following charming and characteristic letter was addressed, was the youngest sister of Matilda Betham, a poetess whom Southey valued, and of Sir William Betham, the well-known genealogist and antiquary.

## LETTER XXI.*

"November 2, 1814.

"*To Miss Barbara Betham.*

"It is very long since I have met with such an agreeable surprise as the sight of your letter, my kind young friend, afforded me. Such a nice letter as it is too. And what a pretty hand you write. I congratulate you on this attainment with great pleasure, because I have so often felt the disadvantage of my own wretched handwriting.

"You wish for London news. I rely upon your sister Ann for gratifying you in this respect, yet I have been endeavouring to recollect whom you might have seen here, and what may have happened to them since, and this effort has only brought the image of little Barbara Betham, unconnected with any other person, so strongly before my eyes that I seem as if I had no other subject to write upon. Now I think I see you with your feet propped upon the fender, your two hands spread out upon your knees—an attitude you always chose when we were in familiar confidential conversation together—telling me long stories of your own home, where now you say you are 'moping on with the same thing every day,' and which then presented nothing but pleasant recollections to your mind. How well I remember your quiet steady face bent over your book. One day, conscience-struck at having wasted so much of your precious time in readings, and feeling yourself, as you prettily

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said, 'quite useless to me,' you went to my drawers and hunted out some unhemmed pocket-handkerchiefs, and by no means could I prevail upon you to resume your story books till you had hemmed them all. I remember, too, your teaching my little maid to read—your sitting with her a whole evening to console her for the death of her sister; and that she in her turn endeavoured to become a comfort to you the next evening when you wept at the sight of Mrs. Holecroft, from whose school you had recently eloped because you were not partial to sitting in the stocks. Those tears, and a few you once dropped when my brother teased you about your supposed fondness for apple dumplings, were the only interruptions to the calm contentedness of your unclouded brow. We still remain the same as you left us, neither better nor wiser, nor perceptibly older, but three years must have made a great alteration in you. How very much, dear Barbara, I should like to see you!

"We still live in Temple-lane, but I am now sitting in a room you never saw; soon after you left us we were distressed by the cries of a cat, which seemed to proceed from the garrets adjoining to ours, and only separated from ours by the locked door on the farther side of my brother's bedroom, which you know was the little room at the top of the kitchen stairs. We had the lock forced and let poor puss out from behind a panel of the wainscot, and she lived with us from that time, for we were in gratitude bound to keep her, as she had introduced us to four untenanted, unowned rooms, and by degrees we have taken possession of these unclaimed apartments—first putting up lines to dry our clothes, then moving my brother's bed into one of these, more commodious than his own room. And last winter, my brother being unable to pursue a work he had begun, owing to the kind interruptions of friends who were more at leisure than

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himself, I persuaded him that he might write at his ease in one of these rooms, as he could not then hear the door knock, or hear himself denied to be at home, which was sure to make him call out and convict the poor maid in a fib. Here, I said, he might be almost really not at home. So I put in an old grate, and made him a fire in the largest of these garrets, and carried in one table and one chair, and bid him write away, and consider himself as much alone as if he were in some lodging on the midst of Salisbury Plain, or any other wide unfrequented place where he could expect few visitors to break in upon his solitude. I left him quite delighted with his new acquisition, but in a few hours he came down again with a sadly dismal face. He could do nothing, he said, with those bare whitewashed walls before his eyes. He could not write in that dull unfurnished prison.

"The next day, before he came home from his office, I had gathered up various bits of old carpeting to cover the floor; and, to a little break the blank look of the bare walls, I hung up a few old prints that used to ornament the kitchen, and after dinner, with great boast of what an improvement I had made, I took Charles once more into his new study. A week of busy labours followed, in which I think you would not have disliked to have been our assistant. My brother and I almost covered the walls with prints, for which purpose he cut out every print from every book in his old library, coming in every now and then to ask my leave to strip a fresh poor author—which he might not do, you know, without my permission, as I am elder sister. There was such pasting, such consultation where their portraits, and where a series of pictures from Ovid, Milton, and Shakespeare would show to most advantage, and in what obscure corner authors of humbler note might be allowed

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to tell their stories. All the books gave up their stories but one—a translation from Ariosto—a delicious set of four-and-twenty prints, and for which I had marked out a conspicuous place; when lo! we found at the moment the scissors were going to work that a part of the poem was printed at the back of every picture. What a cruel disappointment! To conclude this long story about nothing, the poor despised garret is now called the print room, and is become our most favourite sitting-room. Your sister Anne will tell you that your friend Louisa is going to France. Miss Skipper is out of town; Mrs. Reynolds desires to be remembered to you, and so does my neighbour Mrs. Norris, who was your doctress when you were unwell. Her three little children have grown three big children. The lions still live in Exeter Change. Returning home through the Strand, I often hear them roar about twelve o'clock at night. I never hear them without thinking of you, because you seemed so pleased with the sight of them, and said your young companions would stare when you told them you had seen a lion. And now, my dear Barbara, farewell; I have not written such a long letter a long time, but I am very sorry I had nothing amusing to write about. Wishing you may pass happily through the rest of your school days, and every day of your life,

"I remain, your affectionate friend,

"M. LAMB.

"My brother sends his love to you, with the kind remembrance your letter showed you have of us as I was. He joins with me in respects to your good father and mother. Now you have begun, I shall hope to have the pleasure of hearing from you again. I shall always receive a letter from you with very great delight."

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## LETTER XXII.

"Newington, Monday.
[Spring of 1820.]

*Miss Lamb to Mrs. Cowden Clarke.**

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Since we heard of your sad sorrow, you have been perpetually in our thoughts; therefore, you may well imagine how welcome your kind remembrance of us must be. I know not how enough to thank you for it. You bid me write a long letter; but my mind is so possessed with the idea that you must be occupied with one only thought, that all trivial matters seem impertinent. I have just been reading again Mr. Hunt's delicious essay;† which, I am sure, must have come so home to your hearts. I shall always love him for it. I feel that it is all that one can think, but which no one but he could have done so prettily. May he lose the memory of his own babies in seeing them all grow old

* This letter accompanied some personal recollections of Miss Lamb, communicated by Mrs. C. Clarke to the *National Magazine*. I have received Mrs. Clarke's free permission to make what use I pleased of the whole paper; and it was very kindly transcribed for me by Mr. Clarke, with a view to republication. The following passage from the original article may be introduced in elucidation of the immediate subject:

"For the way in which Mary Lamb could minister to a stricken mind, witness a letter of hers addressed to a friend—a mother—into whose home death had for the first time come, taking away her last-born child, of barely two months old. This letter, sacredly kept in the family of her to whom it was written, is now for the first time given to the eyes of the world. Miss Lamb wrote few letters, and fewer still have been published; but the rareness of her effusions enhances their intrinsic worth, and renders it doubly imperative that their gentle beauty of sense and wisdom should not be withheld from general knowledge."

† Entitled, "Deaths of Little Children;" which appeared in the *Indicator* for April 5th, 1820, and which had its origin in the sorrowful event that occasioned Miss Lamb's letter.—*Mrs. C. C.*

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around him! Together with the recollections of your dear baby, the image of a little sister I once had comes as fresh into my mind as if I had seen her as lately. A little cap, with white-satin ribbon, grown yellow with long keeping, and a lock of light hair, were the only relics left of her. The sight of them always brought her pretty, fair face to my view, that to this day I seem to have a perfect recollection of her features. I long to see you; and I hope to do so on Tuesday or Wednesday in next week. Percy Street*—I love to write the word; what comfortable ideas it brings with it! We have been pleasing ourselves, ever since we heard this piece of unexpected good news, with the anticipation of frequent drop-in visits, and all the social comfort of what seems almost next-door neighbourhood.

"Our solitary confinement has answered its purpose even better than I expected. It is so many years since I have been out of town in the spring, that I scarcely knew of the existence of such a season. I see every day some new flower peeping out of the ground, and watch its growth; so that I have a sort of intimate friendship with each. I know the effect of every change of weather upon them,—have learned all their names, the duration of their lives, and the whole progress of their domestic economy. My landlady, a nice, active, old soul, that wants but one year of eighty,—and her daughter, a rather aged young gentlewoman,—are the only labourers in a pretty large garden: for it is a double house, and two long strips of ground are laid into one, well stored with fruit-trees, which will be in full blossom the week after I am gone, and flowers as many as can be crammed in, of all sorts and kinds. But flowers are flowers still; and I must confess I would

* Whither Miss Lamb's friend was about to remove her residence, from the farther (west) end of Oxford Street.—*Mrs. C. C.*

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rather live in Russell Street all my life, and never set my foot but on the London pavement, than be doomed always to enjoy the silent pleasures I now do. We go to bed at ten o'clock—late hours are life-shortening things; but I would rather run all risks, and sit every night—at some places I could name—wishing in vain at eleven o'clock for the entrance of the supper-tray, than be always up and alive at eight-o'clock breakfast, as I am here. We have a scheme to reconcile these things. We have an offer of a very low-rented lodging, a mile nearer town than this. Our notion is, to divide our time in alternate weeks between quiet rest and dear London weariness. We give an answer to-morrow; but what that will be, at this present writing I am unable to say. In the present state of our undecided opinion, a very heavy rain that is now falling may turn the scale. 'Dear rain, do go away,' and let us have a fine, cheerful sunset to argue the matter fairly in. My brother walked seventeen miles yesterday, before dinner. And, notwithstanding his long walk to and from the office, we walk every evening; but I by no means perform in this way so well as I used to do. A twelve-mile walk, one hot Sunday morning, made my feet blister; and they are hardly well now. Charles is not yet come home; but he bid me, with many thanks, to present his love to you and all yours: to all whom, and to each individually, and to Mr. Novello in particular, I beg to add mine. With the sincerest wishes for the health and happiness of all,

"Believe me ever, dear Mary Sabilla,

"Your most affectionate friend,

"MARY ANN LAMB."

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# POETRY FOR CHILDREN.

BY MARY LAMB.

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[The two little volumes containing the poems from which the following are a selection were published by M. J. Godwin, at the Juvenile Library, in 1809, but have hitherto escaped the most diligent search. The pieces here given, rather on account of their literary curiosity than from any other motive, were copied into *The First Book of Poetry, for the Use of Schools*, by W. F. Mylius; tenth edition. London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1828.]

## I.—CLEANLINESS.

COME, my little Robert, near—
Fie! what filthy hands are here!
Who, that e'er could understand
The rare structure of a hand,
With its branching fingers fine,
Work itself of hands divine,
Strong, yet delicately knit,
For ten thousand uses fit,
Overlaid with so clear skin
You may see the blood within,—
Who this hand would choose to cover
With a crust of dirt all over,
Till it look'd in hue and shape
Like the fore foot of an ape!
Man or boy that works or plays
In the fields or the highways,
May, without offence or hurt,
From the soil contract a dirt
Which the next clear spring or river
Washes out and out for ever;

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But to cherish stains impure,
Soil deliberate to endure,
On the skin to fix a stain
Till it works into the grain,
Argues a degenerate mind—
Sordid, slothful, ill-inclin'd,
Wanting in that self-respect
Which does virtue best protect.
All-endearing Cleanliness,
Virtue next to Godliness,
Easiest, cheapest, needfullest duty,
To the body health and beauty;
Who that's human would refuse it,
When a little water does it?

## II.—ENVY.

THIS rose-tree is not made to bear
The violet blue, nor lily fair,
Nor the sweet mignonette:
And if this tree were discontent,
Or wish'd to change its natural bent,
It all in vain would fret.

And, should it fret, you would suppose
It ne'er had seen its own red rose,
Nor after gentle shower
Had ever smell'd its rose's scent,
Or it could ne'er be discontent
With its own pretty flower.

Like such a blind and senseless tree
As I've imagin'd this to be
All envious persons are:

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With care and culture all may find
Some pretty flower in their own mind,
Some talent that is rare.

### III.—THE BOY AND SNAKE.

HENRY was every morning fed
With a full mess of milk and bread.
One day the boy his breakfast took,
And ate it by a purling brook.
His mother lets him have his way.
With free leave Henry every day
Thither repairs, until she heard
Him talking of a fine *gray bird.*
This pretty bird, he said, indeed,
Came every day with him to feed;
And it lov'd him, and lov'd his milk,
And it was smooth and soft, like silk.
On the next morn, she follows Harry;
And carefully she sees him carry
Thro' the long grass his heap'd-up mess.
What was her terror and distress
When she saw the infant take
His bread and milk close to a snake!
Upon the grass he spreads his feast,
And sits down by his frightful guest,
Who had waited for the treat;
And now they both began to eat.
Fond mother! shrink not. O, beware
The least small noise! O, have a care!
The least small noise that may be made,
The wily snake will be afraid—
If he hear the slightest sound,
He will inflict th' envenomed wound.

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She speaks not, moves not, scarce does breathe,
As she stands the trees beneath.
No sound she utters; and she soon
Sees the child lift up his spoon,
And tap the snake upon the head,
Fearless of harm; and then he said,
As speaking to familiar mate:
"Keep on your own side, do, Gray Pate."
The snake then to the other side,
As one rebuked, seems to glide;
And now, again advancing nigh,
Again she hears the infant cry,
Tapping the snake: "Keep further, do;
Mind, Gray Pate, what I say to you."
The danger's o'er!—she sees the boy
(O, what a change from fear to joy!)
Rise and bid the snake "good bye;"
Says he: "Our breakfast's done; and I
Will come again to-morrow day;"
Then, lightly tripping, ran away.

## IV.—THE BEGGAR MAN.

ABJECT, stooping, old, and wan,
See yon wretched beggar man;
Once a father's hopeful heir,
Once a mother's tender care.
When too young to understand,
He but scorch'd his little hand,
By the candle's flaming light
Attracted, dancing, spiral, bright;
Clasping fond her darling round,
A thousand kisses heal'd the wound:

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Now, abject, stooping, old, and wan,
No mother tends the beggar man.

Then nought too good for him to wear,
With cherub face and flaxen hair,
In fancy's choicest gauds array'd,
Cap of lace with rose to aid;
Milk-white hat and feather blue;
Shoes of red; and coral too;
With silver bells to please his ear,
And charm the frequent ready tear.
Now, abject, stooping, old, and wan,
Neglected is the beggar man.

See the boy advance in age,
And learning spreads her useful page;
In vain; for giddy pleasure calls,
And shows the marbles, tops, and balls.
What's learning to the charms of play?
The indulgent tutor must give way.
A heedless wilful dunce, and wild,
The parents' fondness spoil'd the child;
The youth in vagrant courses ran.
Now, abject, stooping, old, and wan,
Their fondling is the beggar man.

## V.—THE MAGPIE'S NEST.

### A FABLE.

WHEN the Arts in their infancy were,
In a fable of old 'tis express'd,
A wise magpie constructed that rare
Little house for young birds, call'd a nest.

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This was talk'd of the whole country round;
You might hear it on every bough sung,
"Now no longer upon the rough ground
Will fond mothers brood over their young:

"For the magpie with exquisite skill
Has invented a moss-covered cell,
Within which a whole family will
In the utmost security dwell."

To her mate did each female bird say,
"Let us fly to the magpie, my dear;
If she will but teach us the way,
A nest we will build us up here.

"It's a thing that's close arch'd over head,
With a hole made to creep out and in;
We, my bird, might make just such a bed,
If we only knew how to begin."

II.

To the magpie soon every bird went,
And in modest terms made their request,
That she would be pleased to consent
To teach them to build up a nest.

She replied, "I will show you the way,
So observe every thing that I do:
First two sticks 'cross each other I lay—"
"To be sure," said the crow; "why I knew

"It must be begun with two sticks,
And I thought that they crossed should be."
Said the pye, "Then some straw and moss mix
In the way you now see done by me."

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"O yes, certainly," said the jackdaw,
"That must follow, of course, I have thought:
Though I never before building saw,
I guess'd that, without being taught."

"More moss, straw, and feathers I place
In this manner,"—continued the pye.
"Yes, no doubt, madam, that is the case:
Tho' no builder myself, so thought I."

III.

Whatever she taught them beside,
In his turn every bird of them said,
Tho' the nest-making art he ne'er tried,
He had just such a thought in his head.

Still the pye went on showing her art,
Till a nest she had built up half way;
She no more of her skill would impart,
But in anger went fluttering away.

And this speech in their hearing she made,
As she perch'd o'er their heads on a tree:
"If ye all were well-skill'd in my trade,
Pray, why came ye to learn it of me?"

When a scholar is willing to learn,
He with silent submission should hear:
Too late they their folly discern;
The effect to this day does appear.

For whenever a pye's nest you see,
Her charming warm canopy view;
All birds' nests but hers seem to be
A magpie's nest just cut in two.*

* I beg to inform my young readers that the magpie is the only bird that builds a top to the nest for her young.—*Note by Mrs. Leicester* [*Mary Lamb*].

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## VI.—TIME SPENT IN DRESS.

In many a lecture, many a book,
You all have heard, you all have read,
That time is precious. Of its use
Much has been written, much been said.

There's not a more productive source
Of waste of time to the young mind
Than dress; as it regards our hours
My view of it is now confined.

Without some calculation, youth
May live to age, and never guess
That no one study they pursue
Takes half the time they give to dress.

Write in your memorandum-book
The time you at your toilet spend;
Then, every moment which you pass
Talking of dress with a young friend:

And ever when your silent thoughts
Have on this subject been intent,
Set down as nearly as you can
How long on dress your thoughts were bent.

If faithfully you should perform
This task, 'twould teach you to repair
Lost hours, by giving unto dress
Not more of time than its due share.

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## VII.—NURSING.

O HUSH, my little baby brother!
Sleep, my love, upon my knee;
What though, dear child, we've lost our mother?
That can never trouble thee.

You are but ten weeks old to-morrow;
What can you know of our loss?
The house is full enough of sorrow;
Little baby, don't be cross.

Peace, cry not so, my dearest love!
Hush, my baby bird, lie still,—
He's quiet now, he does not move,
Fast asleep is little Will.

My only solace, only joy,
Since the sad day I lost my mother,
Is nursing her own Willy boy,
My little orphan brother.

## VIII.—THE BOY AND THE SKYLARK.

### A FABLE.

"A WICKED action fear to do,
When you are by yourself; for tho'
You think you can conceal it,
A little bird that's in the air
The hidden trespass shall declare
And openly reveal it."

Richard this saying oft had heard,
Until the sight of any bird
Would set his heart a-quaking;

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He saw a host of winged spies
For ever o'er him in the skies,
Note of his actions taking.

This pious precept, while it stood
In his remembrance, kept him good
When nobody was by him;
For tho' no human eye was near,
Yet Richard still did wisely fear
The little bird should spy him.

But best resolves will sometimes sleep;
Poor frailty will not always keep
From that which is forbidden;
And Richard one day, left alone,
Laid hands on something not his own,
And hoped the theft was hidden.

His conscience slept a day or two,
As it is very apt to do
When we with pain suppress it;
And though at times a slight remorse
Would raise a pang, it had not force
To make him yet confess it.

II.

When on a day, as he abroad
Walk'd by his mother, in their road
He heard a skylark singing;
Smit with the sound, a flood of tears
Proclaim'd the superstitious fears
His inmost bosom wringing.



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His mother, wondering, saw him cry,
And fondly ask'd the reason why.
Then Richard made confession,
And said, he fear'd the little bird
He singing in the air had heard
Was telling his transgression.

The words which Richard spoke below,
As sounds by nature upwards go,
Were to the skylark carried:
The airy traveller, with surprise
To hear his sayings, in the skies
On his mid journey tarried.

His anger then the bird express'd:
"Sure, since the day I left the nest,
I ne'er heard folly utter'd
So fit to move a skylark's mirth,
As what this little son of earth
Hath in his grossness muttered.

"Dull fool! to think we sons of air
On man's low actions waste a care,
His virtues, or his vices;
Or, soaring on the summer gales,
That we should stoop to carry tales
Of him or his devices!

"Mistaken fool! Man needs not us
His secret merits to discuss,
Or spy out his transgression;
When once he feels his conscience stirr'd,
That voice within him is the *bird*
That moves him to confession."

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## IX.—THE BROKEN DOLL.

An infant is a selfish sprite;
But what of that? The sweet delight
Which from participation springs
Is quite unknown to these young things.
We elder children, then, will smile
At our dear little John awhile,
And bear with him, until he see
There is a sweet felicity
In pleasing more than only one,
Dear little, craving, selfish John.

He laughs, and thinks it a fine joke
That he our new wax-doll has broke.
Anger will never teach him better;
We will the spirit and the letter
Of courtesy to him display,
By taking in a friendly way
These baby frolics, till he learn
True sport from mischief to discern.

Reproof a parent's province is;
A sister's discipline is this:
By studied kindness to effect
A little brother's young respect.
What is a doll? A fragile toy.
What is its loss, if the dear boy,
Who half perceives he's done amiss,
Retain impression of the kiss
That follow'd instant on his cheek?—
If the kind, loving words we speak
Of "Never mind it," "We forgive,"—
If these in his short memory live

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Only, perchance, for half a day,—
Who minds a doll, if that should lay
The first impression in his mind
That sisters are to brothers kind?
For thus the broken doll may prove
Foundation to fraternal love.

## X.—GOING INTO BREECHES.

Joy to Philip!—he this day
Has his long coats cast away,
And (the childish season gone)
Put the manly breeches on.
Officer on gay parade,
Redcoat in his first cockade,
Bridegroom in his wedding trim,
Birthday beau surpassing him,
Never did with conscious gait
Strut about in half the state
Or the pride (yet free from sin)
Of my little MANIKIN;
Never was there pride or bliss
Half so rational as his.
Sashes, frocks, to those that need 'em—
Philip's limbs have got their freedom:
He can run, or he can ride,
And do twenty things beside,
Which his petticoats forbad.
Is he not a happy lad?
Now he's under other banners:
He must leave his former manners,
Bid adieu to female games,
And forget their very names—

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Puss-in-corners, hide-and-seek,
Sports for girls and punies weak!
Baste-the-bear he now may play at,
Leap-frog, football, sport away at;
Show his skill and strength at cricket—
Mark his distance, pitch his wicket;
Run about in winter's snow
Till his cheeks and fingers glow;
Climb a tree, or scale a wall,
Without any fear to fall;
If he get a hurt or bruise,
To complain he must refuse,
Though the anguish and the smart
Go unto his little heart;
He must have his courage ready,
Keep his voice and visage steady,
Brace his eyeballs stiff as drum,
That a tear may never come;
And his grief must only speak
From the colour in his cheek.
This, and more, he must endure—
Hero he in miniature!
This, and more, must now be done,
Now the breeches are put on.

## XI.—WRITTEN IN THE FIRST LEAF OF A CHILD'S MEMORANDUM-BOOK.

My neat and pretty book, when I thy small lines see,
They seem for any use to be unfit for me:
My writing, all misshap'd, uneven as my mind,
Within this narrow space can hardly be confin'd.
Yet I will strive to make my hand less awkward look;
I would not willingly disgrace thee, my neat book!

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The finest pens I'll use, and wondrous pains I'll take;
And I these perfect lines my monitors will make;
And every day I will set down in order due
How that day wasted is; and should there be a few
At the year's end that show more goodly to the sight,—
If, haply, here I find some days not wasted quite,—
If a small portion of them I have pass'd aright,—
Then shall I think the year not wholly was misspent,
And that my Diary has been by some good angel sent.

## XII.—THE BEASTS IN THE TOWER.

WITHIN the precincts of this yard,
Each in his narrow confines barr'd,
Dwells every beast that can be found
On Afric or on Indian ground:
How different was the life they led
In those wild haunts where they were bred,
To this same servitude and fear,
Enslaved by man, they suffer here!

In that uneasy close recess
Couches a sleeping lioness;
That next den holds a bear; the next
A wolf, by hunger ever vext:
There, fiercer from the keeper's lashes,
His teeth the fell hyena gnashes;
That creature on whose back abound
Black spots upon a yellow ground,
A panther is—the fairest beast
That haunteth in the spacious East:
He underneath a fair outside
Does cruelty and treachery hide.

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That catlike beast that to and fro
Restless as fire does ever go,
As if his courage did resent
His limbs in such confinement pent,
That should their prey in forest take,
And make the Indian jungles quake,
A tiger is. Observe how sleek
And glossy smooth his coat: no streak
On satin ever match'd the pride
Of that which marks his furry hide.
How strong his muscles! he with ease
Upon the tallest man could seize;
In his large mouth away could bear him,
And into thousand pieces tear him:
Yet cabin'd so securely here,
The smallest infant need not fear.

II.

That lordly creature next to him
A lion is. Survey each limb:
Observe the texture of his claws,
The massy thickness of those jaws:
His mane that sweeps the ground in length,
Like Samson's locks, betokening strength.
In force and swiftness he excels
Each beast that in the forest dwells;
The savage tribes him king confess
Throughout the howling wilderness:
Woe to the hapless neighbourhood
When he is press'd by want of food!
Of man, or child, or bull, or horse,
He makes his prey; such is his force.
A waste behind him he creates,
Whole villages depopulates;

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Yet here within appointed lines
How small a grate his rage confines!

This place, methinks, resembleth well
The world itself in which we dwell.
Perils and snares on every ground,
Like these wild beasts, beset us round.
But Providence their rage restrains,
Our heavenly Keeper sets them chains;
His goodness saveth every hour
His darlings from the lion's power.

## XIII.—THE FIRST TOOTH.

*Sister.*

THROUGH the house what busy joy
Just because the infant boy
Has a tiny tooth to show!
I have got a double row,
All as white, and all as small;
Yet no one cares for mine at all.
He can say but half a word,
Yet that single sound's preferr'd
To all the words that I can say
In the longest summer day.
He cannot walk; yet if he put
With mimic motion out his foot,
As if he thought he were advancing,
It's prized more than my best dancing.

*Brother.*

Sister, I know you jesting are,
Yet, oh! of jealousy beware.

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If the smallest seed should be
In your mind of jealousy,
It will spring, and it will shoot
Till it bear the baneful fruit.
I remember you, my dear,
Young as is this infant here.
There was not a tooth of those
Your pretty even ivory rows,
But as anxiously was watch'd
Till it burst its shell new-hatch'd,
As if it a phœnix were,
Or some other wonder rare;
So when you began to walk—
So when you began to talk—
As now, the same encomiums pass'd.
'Tis not fitting this should last
Longer than our infant days;
A child is fed with milk and praise.

## XIV.—THE SISTER'S EXPOSTULATION ON THE BROTHER'S LEARNING LATIN.

SHUT these odious books up, brother—
They have made you quite another
Thing from what you used to be;
Once you liked to play with me—
Now you leave me all alone,
And are so conceited grown
With your Latin, you'll scarce look
Upon any English book.
We had used on winter eves
To con over Shakespeare's leaves,
Or on Milton's harder sense
Exercise our diligence—

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And you would explain with ease
The obscurer passages,
Find me out the prettiest places,
The poetic turns and graces,
Which, alas! now you are gone,
I must puzzle out alone;
And oft miss the meaning quite,
Wanting you to set me right.
All this comes since you've been under
Your new master. I much wonder
What great charm it is you see
In those words, *musa*, *musæ*;
Or in what do they excel
Our word, *song*? It sounds as well
To my fancy as the other.
Now believe me, dearest brother,
I would give my finest frock
And my cabinet and stock
Of new playthings, every toy
I would give them all with joy,
Could I you returning see
Back to English and to me.

## XV.—THE BROTHER'S REPLY.

Sister, fie for shame, no more!
Give this ignorant babble o'er;
Nor with little female pride
Things above your sense deride.
Why this foolish underrating
Of my first attempts at Latin?
Know ye not, each thing we prize
Does from small beginnings rise?

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'Twas the same thing with your writing,
Which you now take such delight in.
First you learnt the down-stroke line,
Then the hair-stroke thin and fine,
Then a curve, and then a better,
Till you came to form a letter.
Then a new task was begun—
How to join them two in one;
Till you got (these first steps past)
To your fine text-hand at last.
So, though I at first commence
With the humble Accidence,
And my study's course affords
Little else as yet but words,
I shall venture in a while
At construction, grammar, style,
Learn my syntax, and proceed
Classic authors next to read,
Such as wiser, better, make us,
Sallust, Phædrus, Ovid, Flaccus:
All the poets with their wit,
All the grave historians writ,
Who the lives and actions show
Of men famous long ago;
Even their very sayings giving
In the tongue they used when living.

II.

Think not I shall do that wrong
Either to my native tongue
English authors to despise,
Or those books which you so prize;
Though from them awhile I stray,
By new studies call'd away,

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Them when next I take in hand
I shall better understand.
For I've heard wise men declare
Many words in English are
From the Latin tongue derived,
Of whose sense girls are deprived
'Cause they do not Latin know.—
But if all this anger grow
From this cause,—that you suspect,
By proceedings indirect,
I would keep (as misers pelf)
All this learning to myself;
Sister, to remove this doubt,
Rather than we will fall out
(If our parents will agree),
You shall Latin learn with me.

## XVI.—THE RAINBOW.

After the tempest in the sky,
How sweet yon rainbow to the eye!
Come, my Matilda, now while some
Few drops of rain are yet to come,
In this honeysuckle bower,
Safely shelter'd from the shower,
We may count the colours o'er.
Seven there are, there are no more;
Each in each so finely blended,
Where they begin, or where are ended,
The finest eye can scarcely see.
A fixed thing it seems to be;
But, while we speak, see how it glides
Away, and now observe it hides

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Half of its perfect arch—now we
Scarce any part of it can see.
What is colour? If I were
A natural philosopher,
I would tell you what does make
This meteor every colour take:
But an unlearned eye may view
Nature's rare sights, and love them too.
Whenever I a rainbow see,
Each precious tint is dear to me;
For every colour find I there
Which flowers, which fields, which ladies wear;
My favourite green, the grass's hue,
And the fine deep violet-blue,
And the pretty pale bluebell,
And the rose I love so well;
All the wondrous variations
Of the tulip, pinks, carnations;
This woodbine here, both flower and leaf:
'Tis a truth that's past belief
That every flower and every tree
And every living thing we see,
Every face which we espy,
Every cheek and every eye,
In all their tints, in every shade,
Are from the rainbow's colours made.

## XVII.—THE ROOK AND THE SPARROWS.

A LITTLE boy with crumbs of bread
Many an hungry sparrow fed.
It was a child of little sense
Who this kind bounty did dispense;

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For suddenly it was withdrawn,
And all the birds were left forlorn
In a hard time of frost and snow,
Not knowing where for food to go.
He would no longer give them bread
Because he had observed, he said,
That sometimes to the window came
A great black bird, a rook by name,
And took away a small bird's share.
So foolish Henry did not care
What became of the great rook
That from the little sparrows took
Now and then, as 'twere by stealth,
A part of their abundant wealth;
Nor ever more would feed his sparrows.
*Thus ignorance a kind heart narrows.*
I wish I had been there,—I would
Have told the child, rooks live by food
In the same way the sparrows do.
I also would have told him too
Birds act by instinct, and ne'er can
Attain the rectitude of man.
Nay that even, when distress
Does on poor human nature press,
We need not be too strict in seeing
The failings of a fellow-being.

## XVIII.—FEIGNED COURAGE.

HORATIO, of ideal courage vain,
Was flourishing in air his father's cane,
And, as the fumes of valour swell'd his pate,
Now thought himself *this* hero, and now *that:*

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"And now," he cried, "I will Achilles be;
My sword I brandish: see, the Trojans flee!
Now I'll be Hector, when his angry blade
A lane thro' heaps of slaughter'd Grecians made!
And now my deeds still braver I'll evince,—
I am no less than Edward the Black Prince.—
Give way, ye coward French!"—As thus he spoke,
And aim'd in fancy a sufficient stroke
To fix the fate of Cressy or Poictiers
(The Muse relates the Hero's fate with tears),
He struck his milk-white hand against a nail,
Sees his own blood, and feels his courage fail.
Ah! where is now that boasted valour flown
That in the tented field so late was shown?
Achilles weeps, great Hector hangs his head,
And the Black Prince goes whimpering to bed.

## XIX.—THE PEACH.

MAMMA gave us a single peach—
She shared it among seven;
Now you may think that unto each
But a small piece was given.

Yet though each share was very small,
We own'd, when it was eaten,
Being so little for us all
Did its fine flavour heighten.

The tear was in our parent's eye,—
It seem'd quite out of season:
When we ask'd wherefore she did cry,
She thus explain'd the reason:

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"The cause, my children, I may say,
Was joy, and not dejection;
The peach, which made you all so gay,
Gave rise to this reflection:

"It's many a mother's lot to share,
Seven hungry children viewing,
A morsel of the coarsest fare,
As I this peach was doing."

## XX.—THE FIRST SIGHT OF GREEN FIELDS.

LATELY an equipage I overtook,
And help'd to lift it o'er a narrow brook;
No horse it had, except one boy, who drew
His sister out in it the fields to view.
O happy town-bred girl, in fine chaise going
For the first time to see the green grass growing!
This was the end and purport of the ride,
I learn'd, as walking slowly by their side
I heard their conversation. Often she—
"Brother, is this the country that I see?"
The bricks were smoking, and the ground was broke,
There were no signs of verdure when she spoke.
He, as the well-inform'd delight in chiding
The ignorant, these questions still deriding,
To his good judgment modestly she yields;
Till, brick-kilns past, they reach'd the open fields.
Then, as with rapturous wonder round she gazes
On the green grass, the buttercups and daisies,—
"This is the country, sure enough!" she cries:
"Is't not a charming place!" The boy replies,
"We'll go no farther." "No," says she, "no need:
No finer place than this can be indeed!"

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I left them gathering flowers, the happiest pair
That ever London sent to breathe the fine fresh air.

## XXI.—MEMORY.

"FOR gold could Memory be bought,
What treasures would she not be worth!
If from afar she could be brought,
I'd travel for her through the earth."

This exclamation once was made
By one who had obtain'd the name
Of young forgetful Adelaide;
And while she spoke, lo! Memory came—

If Memory indeed it were,
Or such it only feign'd to be—
A female figure came to her,
Who said, "My name is Memory!

"Gold purchases in me no share,
Nor do I dwell in distant land;
Study, and thought, and watchful care
In every place may me command.

"I am not lightly to be won;
A visit only now I make;
And much must by yourself be done,
Ere me you for an inmate take.

"The only substitute for me
Was ever found, is call'd a pen;
The frequent use of that will be
The way to make me come again."



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## XXII.—ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

I HAVE taught your young lips the good words to say over,
Which from the petition we call The Lord's Prayer,
And now let me help my dear child to discover
The meaning of all the good words that are there.

"Our Father,"—the same appellation is given
To a parent on earth, and a Parent of all—
O gracious permission! the God that's in heaven
Allows His poor creatures Him Father to call.

To "hallow His name," is to think with devotion
Of it, and with reverence mention the same;
Though you are so young, you should strive for some notion
Of the awe we should feel at the Holy One's name.

His "will done on earth, as it is done in heaven,"
Is a wish and a hope we are suffered to breathe
That such grace and favour to us may be given,—
Like good angels on high we may live here beneath.

"Our daily bread give us," your young apprehension
May well understand, is to pray for our food;
Although we ask bread, and no other thing mention,
God's bounty gives all things sufficient and good.

You pray that your "trespasses may be forgiven,
As you forgive those that are done unto you."
Before you say this to the God that's in heaven,
Consider the words which you speak—are they true?

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If any one has in the past time offended
Us angry creatures, who soon take offence,
These words in the prayer are surely intended
To soften our minds, and expel wrath from thence.

We pray that "temptations may never assail us,"
And "deliverance beg from all evil" we find:
But we never can hope that our prayer will avail us,
If we strive not to banish ill thoughts from our mind.

"For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever:" these titles are meant
To express God's dominion and majesty o'er ye:
And "Amen" to the sense of the whole gives assent.

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# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAMBS.

## BY ONE WHO KNEW THEM

(MRS. COWDEN CLARKE, *née* VICTORIA NOVELLO).

[The following pages are reprinted from the *National Magazine*, by permission. They contain some particulars of the Lambs' household or fireside life which are not to be found elsewhere, and afford additional information on the character and personal appearance of Miss Lamb, Elia's *alter ego*.]

MISS LAMB bore a strong personal resemblance to her brother; being in stature under middle height, possessing well-cut features, and a countenance of singular sweetness, with intelligence. Her brown eyes were soft, yet penetrating; her nose and mouth very shapely; while the general expression was mildness itself. She had a speaking-voice gentle and persuasive; and her smile was her brother's own—winning in the extreme. There was a certain catch, or emotional breathingness, in her utterance, which gave an inexpressible charm to her reading of poetry, and which lent a captivating earnestness to her mode of speech when addressing those she liked. This slight check, with its yearning, eager effect in her voice, had something softenedly akin to her brother Charles's impediment of articulation: in him it scarcely amounted to a stammer; in her it merely imparted additional stress to the fine-sensed suggestions

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she made to those whom she counselled or consoled. She had a mind at once nobly toned and practical, making her ever a chosen source of confidence among her friends, who turned to her for consultation, confirmation, and advice, in matters of nicest moment,—always secure of deriving from her both aid and solace. Her manner was easy, almost homely, so quiet, unaffected, and perfectly unpretending was it. Beneath the sparing talk and retiring carriage, few casual observers would have suspected the ample information and large intelligence that lay comprised there. She was oftener a listener than a speaker. In the modest-'havioured woman simply sitting there, taking small share in general conversation, few who did not know her would have imagined the accomplished classical scholar, the excellent understanding, the altogether rarely gifted being, morally and mentally, that Mary Lamb was. Her apparel was always of the plainest kind; a black stuff or silk gown, made and worn in the simplest fashion conceivable. She took snuff liberally—a habit that had evidently grown out of her propensity to sympathise with and share all her brother's tastes; and it certainly had the effect of enhancing her likeness to him. She had a small, white, and delicately formed hand; and as it hovered above the tortoise-shell box containing the powder so strongly approved by them both, in search of a stimulating pinch, the act seemed yet another link of association between the brother and sister, when hanging together over their favourite books and studies.

As may be gathered from the books which Miss Lamb wrote, in conjunction with her brother,—*Poetry for Children*, *Tales from Shakespeare*, and *Mrs. Leicester's School*,—she had a most tender sympathy with the young. She was encouraging and affectionate towards them, and won them to regard her with a familiarity and fondness

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rarely felt by them for grown people who are not their relations. She entered into their juvenile ideas with a tact and skill quite surprising. She threw herself so entirely into *their* way of thinking, and contrived to take an estimate of things so completely from *their* point of view, that she made them rejoice to have her for their co-mate in affairs that interested them. While thus lending herself to their notions, she, with a judiciousness peculiar to her, imbued her words with the wisdom and experience that belonged to her nature and her maturer years; so that, while she seemed but the listening, concurring friend, she was also the helping, guiding friend. Her valuable monitions never took the form of reproof, but were always dropped in with the air of agreed propositions, as if they grew out of the subject in question, and presented themselves as matters of course to both her young companions and herself.

One of these instances resulted from the kind permission which Mary Lamb gave to the young girl above alluded to,—Victoria Novello,—that she should come to her on certain mornings, when Miss Lamb promised to hear her repeat her Latin grammar, and hear her read poetry with the due musically rhythmical intonation. Even now the breathing murmur of the voice in which Mary Lamb gave low but melodious utterance to those opening lines of the *Paradise Lost*,—

> "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe,"—

sounding full and rounded and harmonious, though so subdued in tone, rings clear and distinct in the memory of her who heard the reader. The echo of that gentle voice vibrates through the lapse of many a revolving year, true and unbroken, in the heart where the low-breathed sound first awoke response, teaching,

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together with the fine appreciation of verse-music, the finer love of intellect conjoined with goodness and kindness. The instance of wise precept couched in playful speech pertained to the Latin lessons. One morning, just as Victoria was about to repeat her allotted task, in rushed a young boy,* who, like herself, enjoyed the privilege of Miss Lamb's instruction in the Latin language. His mode of entrance—hasty and abrupt—sufficiently denoted his eagerness to have his lesson heard at once, and done with, that he might be gone again; accordingly, Miss Lamb, asking Victoria to give up her turn, desired the youth—Hazlitt's son—to repeat his pages of grammar first. Off he set; rattled through the first conjugation post-haste; darted through the second without drawing breath; and so on, right through, in no time. The rapidity, the volubility, the triumphant slap-dash of the feat perfectly dazzled the imagination of poor Victoria, who stood admiring by, an amazed witness of the boy's proficiency. She herself—a quiet, plodding little girl—had only by dint of diligent study, and patient, persevering poring, been able to achieve a slow learning, and as slow a repetition, of her lessons. This brilliant, off-hand method of despatching the Latin grammar was a glory she had never dreamed of. Her ambition was fired; and the next time she presented herself, book in hand, before Miss Lamb, she had no sooner delivered it into her hearer's hand, than she attempted to scour through her verb at the same rattling pace which had so excited her emulative admiration. Scarce a moment, and her stumbling scamper was checked.

"Stay, stay! how's this? What are you about, little Vicky?" asked the laughing voice of Mary Lamb.

* William Hazlitt, only son of the author of *Table-Talk*, &c. He was then about eight years old.

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"Oh, I see. Well, go on; but gently, gently; no need of hurry." She heard her to an end, then said: "I see what we have been doing—trying to be as quick and clever as William, fancying it vastly grand to get on at a great rate, as he does. But there's this difference; it's natural in him, while it's imitation in you. Now, far better go on in your old staid way,—which is your own way,—than try to take up a way that may become him, but can never become you, even were you to succeed in acquiring it. We'll each of us keep to our own natural ways, and then we shall be sure to do our best."

On one of these occasions of the Latin lessons in Russell Street, Covent Garden, where Mr. and Miss Lamb then lived, Victoria saw a lady come in, who appeared to her strikingly intellectual-looking, and still young; she was surprised, therefore, to hear the lady say, in the course of conversation, "Oh, as for me, my dear Miss Lamb, I'm nothing now but a stocking-mending old woman." When the lady's visit came to an end, and she was gone, Mary Lamb took occasion to tell Victoria who she was, and to explain her curious speech. The lady was no other than Miss Kelly; and Mary Lamb, while describing to the young girl the eminent merits of the admirable actress, showed her how a temporary depression of spirits in an artistic nature sometimes takes refuge in a half-playful, half-bitter irony of speech.

At the house in Russell Street, Victoria met Emma Isola; and among her pleasantest juvenile recollections is the way in which Mary Lamb thought for the natural pleasure the two young girls took in each other's society, by bringing them together; and when, upon one occasion, there was a large company assembled, Miss Lamb allowed Emma and Victoria to go together into a room

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by themselves, if they preferred their mutual chat to the conversation of the elder people.

Once, when some visitors chanced to drop in unexpectedly upon her and her brother, just as they were going to sit down to their plain dinner of a bit of roast mutton, with her usual frank hospitality she pressed them to stay and partake, cutting up the small joint into five equal portions, and saying in her simple, easy way, so truly her own, "There's a chop apiece for us; and we can make up with bread-and-cheese if we want more." With such a woman to carve for you and eat with you, neck-of-mutton was better than venison; while bread-and-cheese more than replaced varied courses of richest or daintiest dishes.

Mary Lamb, ever thoughtful to procure a pleasure for young people, finding that one of her and her brother's acquaintances—Howard Payne—was going to France, she requested him, on his way to Paris, to call at Boulogne, and see Victoria Novello, who had been placed by her parents in a family there for a time to learn the language. Knowing how welcome a visit from any one who had lately seen her friends in England would be to the young girl, Miss Lamb urged Howard Payne not to omit this; her brother Charles seconding her by adding, in his usual sportive style, "Do; you needn't be afraid of Miss Novello; she speaks only a little coast French."

At the "Lambs' house," Victoria several times saw Colonel Phillips (the man who shot the savage that killed Captain Cook), and heard him describe Madame de Staël's manner in society, saying that he remembered she had a habit while she discoursed of taking a scrap of paper and a pair of scissors, and snipping it to bits, as an employment for her fingers: that once he observed her to be at a loss for this her usual mechanical

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resource, and he quietly placed near her a back of a letter from his pocket; afterwards she earnestly thanked him for this timely supply of the means she desired as a needful aid to thought and speech. He also mentioned his reminiscence of Gibbon, the historian; and related the way in which he would hold a pinch of snuff between his finger and his thumb while he recounted an anecdote, invariably dropping the pinch at the point of the story. The colonel once spoke of Garrick; telling how, as a raw youth, coming to town, he had determined to go and see the great actor; and how, being but slenderly provided in pocket, he had pawned one of his shirts ("And shirts were of value in those days, with their fine linen and ruffles," he said), to enable him to pay his entrance at the theatre. Miss Lamb being referred to, and asked if she remembered Garrick, replied, in her simple-speeched way, "I saw him once; but I was too young to understand much about his acting. I only know I thought it was mighty fine."

There was a certain old-world fashion in Mary Lamb's diction which gave it a most natural and quaintly pleasant effect, and which heightened rather than detracted from the more heartfelt or important things she uttered. She had a way of repeating her brother's words assertingly when he spoke to her. He once said (with his peculiar mood of tenderness, beneath blunt, abrupt speech), "You must die first, Mary." She nodded, with her little quiet nod and sweet smile: "Yes, I must die first, Charles."

At another time, he said, in his whimsical way, plucking out the words in gasps, as it were, between the smiles with which he looked at her: "I call my sister 'Moll,' before the servants; 'Mary,' in presence of friends; and 'Maria,' when I am alone with her."

When the inimitable comic actor Munden took his

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farewell of the stage, Miss Lamb and her brother failed not to attend the last appearance of their favourite; and it was upon this occasion that Mary made that admirable pun, which has sometimes been attributed to Charles—"Sic transit gloria *Munden!*" During the few final performances of the veteran comedian, Victoria was taken by her father and mother to see him when he played Old Dornton in *The Road to Ruin*, and Crack in *The Turnpike Gate*. Miss Lamb, hearing of the promised treat, with her usual kindly thought and wisdom, urged the young girl to give her utmost attention to the actor's style. "When you are an old woman like me, people will ask you about Munden's acting, as they now ask me about Garrick's; so take particular care to observe all he does, and *how* he does it." Owing to this considerate reminder, the very look, the very gesture, the whole bearing and manner of Munden,—first in the pathetic character of the gentleman-father, next in the farce-character of the village cobbler,—remain impressed upon the brain of her who witnessed them as if beheld but yesterday. The tipsy lunge with which he rolled up to the table whereon stood that tempting brown jug; the leer of mingled slyness and attempted unconcernedness with which he slid out his furtive thought to the audience—"Some gentleman has left his ale?" then, with an unctuous smack of his lips, jovial and anticipative, adding, "And some other gentleman will drink it!"—all stand present to fancy, vivid and unforgotten.

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# CHARLES LAMB.

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# New Illustrations

OF THE

# *LIFE AND CHARACTER*

OF

# CHARLES LAMB.

## CHAPTER I.

Opening history—Early struggles—A domestic tragedy—First friendships. (1790-6.)

THE earliest facts relative to the worldly history of Charles Lamb and his sister remain to us in a scattered form in his own writings.

"I was born," he says, "and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple.* Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountain, its river, I had almost said—for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places?—these are of my oldest recollections.

"The elders with whom I was brought up were of a character not likely to let slip the sacred observance of any old institution; and the ringing out of the old year was kept by them with circumstances of peculiar cere-

* Inner Temple Lane, near Crown-Office Row, where Lamb was born in 1775, occupied the site of what is now known as Johnson's Buildings on one side, and Goldsmith's Buildings on the other.

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mony. In those days the sound of those midnight chimes, though it seemed to raise hilarity in all around me, never failed to bring a train of pensive imagery into my fancy."

Lamb's father was, as is well known, clerk to Mr. Salt, a bencher of the Inner Temple. He was more than a clerk: he was Mr. Salt's confidential servant—his friend. Old Mr. Lamb's character is beautifully sketched in one of the *Essays of Elia:*

"Lovel [Lamb] took care of every thing. He was at once his [Mr. Salt's] clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his 'flapper,' his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer. He did nothing without consulting Lovel, or failed in any thing without expecting and fearing his admonishing. He put himself almost too much in his hands, had they not been the purest in the world. He resigned his title almost to respect as a master, if L. could ever have forgotten for a moment that he was a servant.

"L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing; had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it*); possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior; moulded heads in clay or plaster-of-Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage-boards, and such small cabinet toys, to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits; and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover, and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a-fishing with. I saw him in his old age and the decay of his

* This is engraved in Mr. Procter's *Memoir of Charles Lamb*; 1866.

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Crown Office Row, Temple, where Lamb was born.

Blue-coat School.

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faculties, palsy-smitten, in the last sad stage of human weakness—'a remnant most forlorn of what he was;' yet even then his eye would light up upon the mention of his favourite Garrick. He was greatest, he would say, in Bayes—'was upon the stage nearly throughout the whole performance, and as busy as a bee.' At intervals, too, he would speak of his former life, and how he came up a little boy from Lincoln to go to service, and how his mother cried at parting with him; and how he returned, after some few years' absence, in his smart new livery to see her, and she blessed herself at the change, and could hardly be brought to believe that it was 'her own bairn.' And then, the excitement subsiding, he would weep, till I have wished that sad second-childhood might have a mother still to lay its head upon her lap. But the common mother of us all in no long time after received him gently into hers."

Mr. Lamb, in his best days, was undoubtedly a person of quite average physical vigour.* According to his son's account, he excelled in some athletic sports; and there is a story that he once forced a gentleman's sword out of his hand, and struck him with the hilt of it, for having affronted a female. He appears to have been a small-made man, but well put together, and trimly built. He was a shattered wreck when Coleridge and Southey first saw the family: body and mind had equally collapsed. From the descriptions which we have of him and Mrs. Lamb, they must have been of a ripe age at

* "A merrier man,
A man more apt to frame matter for mirth,
Mad jokes, and anticks for a Christmas-eve,
Making life social, and the laggard time
To move on nimbly, never yet did cheer
The little circle of domestic friends."

*Blank Verse by Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb*, 1798, p. 79.



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that time (1795); but how old they were, when they died, is more than is precisely known.*

The truth seems to have been, then, that Mr. Lamb (the elder) was a native of Lincoln, born in a lowly station—probably, from a hint in *Elia*, a shepherd on the neighbouring hills;† that he had come up to London, at an early date, to seek his fortune in the Great City; that he had entered domestic service there; that he had married, possibly on his savings, the housekeeper at Gilston, in Hertfordshire, the seat of the Plumer-Wards;‡ and that, after more or less numerous changes

* Of Lamb's copy of the *Guardian*, two odd volumes, 1750 and 1734, the first had his father's name written in it: "John Lamb, 1756;" and Charles's own name, in a childish hand. Old Mr. Lamb also possessed Butler's *Hudibras*, in the edition of 1726; in it was written, "Mr. John Lamb." See *Appendix* (at end of book), Nos. 17, 18.

† "And what if my ancestor at that date [two centuries back] was some Damœtas, feeding flocks, not his own, upon the hills of Lincoln?"—*Blakesmoor in H—shire* (*Elia*, 1833, p. 7).

‡ Robert Ward, of Blakesware, married (secondly) Jane, widow of William Plumer, and through her became possessed of the Gilston-Park estate. He was, previous to his marriage, possessed of considerable property, which was much increased in consequence of his marriage. At his death there was much litigation as to the succession to the property. His children by his former wife claimed it, as did also the relatives of Mrs. Plumer, who was granddaughter of the Earl of Abercorn. The consequence was, that the house was completely destroyed—each party being anxious that the other should not possess it. The furniture, the curious tapestry hangings described by Lamb,—every thing was ruthlessly dragged out upon the lawn, and burnt. So great an amount of furniture was collected in the mansion, that the work of destruction was not completed in less than ten days, during which time many articles were saved from the flames by the farm-labourers around, whose cottages still contain the only remaining relics of Blakesware.

This summer (1868) a crop of wheat is growing on the site of the house.

Lamb seems to have been officially, as well as domestically, connected with the Plumers of Gilston; for, in his Essay on the "South-Sea House," as it was about 1792, he speaks of a natural son of Walter Plumer as one of his colleagues there.

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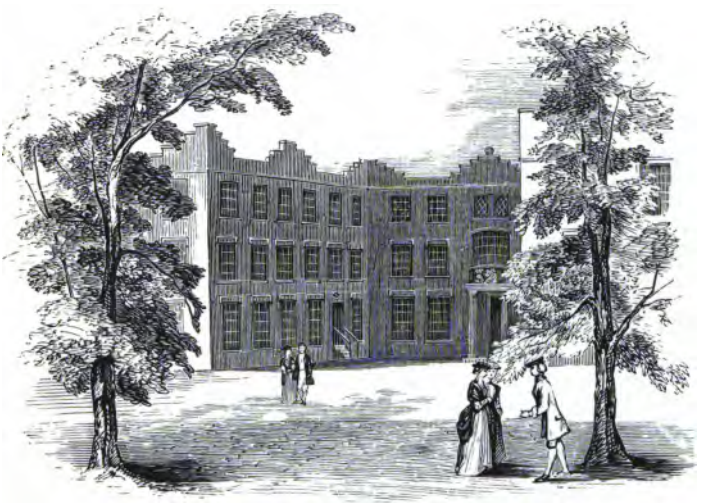

Blakeswear House.

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of employ, he had finally retired on a small pension granted to him by his last master, Mr. Samuel Salt.

This allowance from Mr. Salt formed, with the slender proceeds of a junior clerkship, first in the South-Sea House, and then in the East-India House,* the entire maintenance of Charles Lamb's parents and their belongings, from Charles's earliest youth till his arrival at manhood. Mr. Procter observes, that "he was born almost in penury." So too, I apprehend, was he bred.

Somewhere else Lamb describes his aunt, who lived under the same roof with them all in the Temple, and afterwards in Little Queen Street:

"I had an aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say, that I was the only thing in it which she loved; and when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me with a mother's tears. A partiality quite so exclusive, my reason cannot altogether approve. She was from morning till night poring over good books, and devotional exercises. Her favourite volumes were Thomas à Kempis, in Stanhope's translation; and a Roman-Catholic Prayer-book, with the *Matins* and *Complines*† regularly set down,—terms which I was at that time too young to understand. She persisted in reading them, although admonished daily concerning their Papistical tendency; and went to church every Sabbath, as a good Protestant should do. These were the only books she studied; though I think at one period of her

* The East-India Company and the East-India House are now things of the past. Of the building, not one stone remains upon another: *East-India Avenue* marks the site.

† "The conclusion of the Dayes Office" (Lady Lucy Herbert's *Methods and Practises of Devotion*; Bruges, 1743; 8vo; p. 42). But there was an edition in 1742, under a different title.

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life, she told me, she had read with great satisfaction the *Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman.*"*

I have no knowledge of the person who stood in the relation of godfather to Lamb, beyond the description and portrait of him which occurs in the Elian paper entitled, "My First Play."

"He kept the oil-shop," says Lamb, "(now Davies's), at the corner of Featherstone Building, in Holborn. F. was a tall, grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. . . . He was the most gentlemanly of oilmen. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Ciceronian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips!), which my better knowledge has since enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation, they should have been sounded *vice versâ*—but in those young years they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright from Seneca or Varro—in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicised, into something like *verse verse.*"

This F., it seems, supplied the oil required for illuminating purposes at Drury Lane, and thought himself repaid by the honour of Mr. Sheridan's acquaintance, and free admissions to the theatre, in the great man's autograph, without stint. It was so that the oil-account

* Lamb has lines, "Written on the Day of my Aunt's Funeral," in *Blank Verse by Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb*, 1798, p. 77. He there says:

"I have not forgot
How thou didst love thy Charles, when he was yet
A prating schoolboy."

A little further on, the writer draws a portrait of himself as he appeared at Christ's Hospital:

"How did thine eye peruse him round and round,
And hardly knew him in his yellow coats,
Red-leathern belt, and gown of russet blue."

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# BLANK VERSE,

BY

*CHARLES LLOYD*

AND

*CHARLES LAMB.*

LONDON:
*PRINTED BY T. BENSLEY,*
FOR JOHN AND ARTHUR ARCH, N° 23, GRACE-CHURCH STREET.

1798.

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was satisfied, Lamb gives us to understand. Sheridan's other creditors were, unluckily, less complacent.

In town, the Temple and its precincts were Lamb's earliest haunts. They remained to the last firmly associated in his mind with the pleasures and troubles of his childhood and adolescence. He once remarked to a very dear friend, "I live where I did, in a *private* manner, because I don't like state. Nothing is so disagreeable to me as the clamours and applauses of the mob. For this reason I live in an *obscure* situation in one of the courts of the Temple."

But, beyond the range and bustle of London, there was also a spot which many tender recollections had hallowed. He says:

"The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End, or Mackarel End,* as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farmhouse, delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister."

Bridget was, of course, his sister Mary. How perfectly that wish, that *impossibility*, was to be accomplished!

The Lambs were lodging in Little Queen Street in the year 1796. It was their second place of residence, so far as our knowledge goes. They had removed thither from the Temple, apparently, in 1795;

* *End*, as a terminal appellation given to places, is synonymous with *ean*, A.S. for *waters*. A correspondent of *Notes and Queries* (2d S. x. 97), Mr. Joseph Rix, notices that in Huntingdonshire, or at least at St. Neot's, the word is pronounced *eend*.

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at least, somebody who had occasion to search out Charles's whereabouts this year, discovered the family in these narrow quarters out of Holborn. Their circumstances were humble in the extreme; but, then, their wants and views in life were in proportion. There was old Mr. Lamb, his wife, Charles and his sister, and Aunt Hetty. John Lamb lived elsewhere. He made no part of the little household. He will not figure by any means prominently in these pages.

In the year 1796, Charles was one-and-twenty years old; and in the September of that year a tragical occurrence took place in the bosom of his family—in the very heart of his home. Not so much, it is to be presumed, from mere delicacy, as from some timely exertion of influence in the proper quarter, the names of the parties concerned were suppressed; but the particulars following, here first (I believe) reprinted *verbatim* from the *Annual Register* for September 23, 1796, referred, as a positive matter of fact, to the poor lodgers in Little Queen Street, unexpectedly become worse than poor:

"This afternoon, the coroner's jury sat on the body of a lady in the neighbourhood of Holborn, who died in consequence of a wound from her daughter, the preceding day. While the family were preparing dinner, the young lady, in a fit of insanity, seized a case-knife lying on the table, and in a menacing manner pursued a little girl, her apprentice, round the room. On the eager calls of her helpless, infirm mother to forbear, she renounced her first object, and, with loud shrieks, approached her parent. The child, by her cries, quickly brought up the landlord of the house—but too late. The dreadful scene presented to him the mother lifeless on a chair; her daughter yet wildly standing over her with the fatal knife; and the venerable old man, her father, weeping by her side, himself bleeding at the

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Chapel Street, Pentonville.

East-India House.

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forehead from the effects of a blow he received from one of the forks she had been madly hurling about the room. But a few days prior to this, the family had discovered some symptoms of lunacy in her, which had so much increased on the Wednesday evening that her brother, early the next morning, went in quest of Dr. Pitcairn; had that gentleman been providentially met with, the fatal catastrophe had, probably, been prevented. She had once before, in the earlier part of her life, been deranged from the harassing fatigues of too much business. As her carriage towards her mother had ever been affectionate in the extreme, it is believed that to her increased attentiveness to her is to be ascribed the loss of her reason at this time. The jury, without hesitating, brought in their verdict—Lunacy."

Lamb's feelings immediately after this deplorable event are vividly portrayed in one or two letters to Coleridge, and in those lines, addressed to his mother, which were first printed in the joint-stock volume of 1798,* and are also to be seen in Southey's correspondence. It would be inconsistent with my purpose to reproduce them here.

The poor India-House clerk was temporarily deprived of his reason under the weight of the shock, and for six weeks, in the winter of 1796-7, he was an inmate of Hoxton Asylum. Whether he was placed there by John Lamb, or went voluntarily, we shall probably never arrive at knowing. But he had lucid intervals; and, during one of these, he wrote some verses,

* Lamb says, apostrophising his dead parent:

"Thou shouldst have longer lived, and to the grave
Have peacefully gone down in full old age.
Thy children would have tended thy gray hairs;
We might have sat, as we have often done,
By our fireside, and talked whole nights away,
Old times, old friends, and old events recalling."

*Blank Verse by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb*, 1798, p. 84.

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which he afterwards sent to Coleridge. Next to his sister and remaining parent, Coleridge was foremost in his mind. He called him "his friend, his brother."

Mr. Lamb and Aunt Hetty did not long survive Mrs. Lamb. They both seem to have succumbed to old age and natural exhaustion. Charles and his sister were left by themselves. The former had returned to his normal state of health, bodily and mental, and the painful responsibility of his new position, so far from operating prejudicially (as was to be feared), gave him added strength and nerve. Miss Lamb's condition was, unfortunately, less satisfactory. In her case the fatal frenzy was not transient: at any moment it might return, with similar results. She was a confirmed invalid for life; but her brother, with heroic self-devotion, undertook the care of his only remaining relative; and, for nearly forty years to come, their two lives were so blended as to be all but one.

Miss Lamb's illnesses were very occasional, however. Her healthy intervals were of uncertain, but very often of long, duration; and it was a most providential circumstance that, by some instinct, she was at all times capable of foreseeing the approach of a relapse.

I shall now proceed to show, so far as I am enabled to do so, that Charles and Mary Lamb—though reduced in a somewhat abrupt manner to their own resources and mutual consolations, and in point of worldly circumstances very slenderly provided—were not in any sense of the word friendless; and, indeed, in the best sense of friendship, were beginning to find gathering round them a small circle of visitors and correspondents. The germ of this now slowly springing-up society for the brother and sister was Charles's renewal of acquaintance with one or two of his former schoolfellows at Christ's Hos-

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pital; notably with Coleridge, the most distinguished of them—Coleridge, already an author and politician, though Lamb's senior by very few years. Coleridge had been born in 1772; Lamb, in 1775.

As far as his friendship with Coleridge was concerned, Lamb must not be considered as lying under obligations to his old schoolmate, and now brother-poet, which he could not requite; for Lamb both gave and took here,—as witness, for example, the great advice which he tendered in 1796 to one his senior in years, and already a full-fledged author: his words were, "Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge." This was not the kind of counsel which most writers of one-and-twenty would have offered, or been prepared to follow. But Lamb acted upon the advice of which he was the giver; and, indeed, the fault in his early productions was, that simplicity was sometimes carried to an affectation—for extremes meet.

Coleridge and Lamb must have come together for the first time (after school-days) not later than 1795, long before the consummation of the dreadful tragedy; for in 1795 Lamb was also slightly acquainted with Southey, and there was no medium so likely to have introduced the two to each other as Coleridge. I must add, that it is hardly possible to suggest any other process by which Lamb and Southey could have met.

Lamb and Coleridge were forced, by the difference—or, rather, divergence—of their walks in life, to *converse by letter* almost from the outset. In Lamb's own words, which apply immediately to this sort of dialogue on paper with Coleridge, he "whispered through a long trumpet" in his ear. The correspondence commenced in 1796,—at least, all letters of a prior date have disappeared, if such ever existed. As to Coleridge's share in this written conversation, it has perished *in toto*. If it was equal to

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his friend's, the loss is grave; for the most admirable matter—the richest stores of biographical illustration—the most instructive glimpses of the growth of the writer's mind—lie still, at this time of day, half-hidden from the general eye, in the journal-like epistles directed by Lamb to Coleridge between 1796 and the close of the century. It is chiefly with these four years that I am concerned. The later letters are less momentous—and for the reason that they were, for the most part, letters, and nothing more.

It is very different with those from which it will become part of my business to select a few of the pertinent passages. One of Lamb's biographers has adduced, as a proof of his generous simplicity and native kindness of heart, a personal anecdote, to the effect that Lamb, thinking that his friend was reduced to low spirits by pecuniary distress, offered him 100*l.* which he had in his desk at the office, and which, he gave him to understand, was perfectly superfluous to him, and, in fact, an incumbrance he was only awaiting an opportunity to get rid of! But this incident belongs to a period when Lamb was in a comparatively affluent way, and when, perhaps, 100*l.* would have been no such serious affair. Let us turn back thirty years, however, and we shall come to an episode ten times more touching and impressive—an episode, too, which appears to establish how honourably consistent with himself was Charles Lamb. The anecdote of 1815 (or thereabout) is, in fact, of indifferent value, standing by itself; but, side by side with the earlier story, it improves the pleasant moral.

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## CHAPTER II.

**The Lambs and their friends (*continued*)—Coleridge—Southey—Jem White—Sources of Lamb's poetical and humoristic inspiration—Le Grice. (1796-8.)**

AFTER his mother's death, Lamb had prevailed on a rich relative out of town to take Aunt Hetty temporarily under her roof. The visitor was not made comfortable in her new quarters, and wished to return—a wish which was not opposed by her half-reluctant entertainer. Charles writes to Coleridge:

"Now, much as I should rejoice to transplant the poor old creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straitened we are already—how unable already to answer any demand which sickness, or any extraordinary expense, may create."

Coleridge's own circumstances at this date were rather worse than his friend's, if it were possible; and, just before, Lamb, poorly off as he was by his own acknowledgment, had sent down some new clothes to Coleridge, and paid the bill—aware, probably, of Coleridge's total inability to do so. The letters, from which the two subjoined extracts are derived, were written in 1796, one close upon the other:

"Make yourself perfectly easy about May [the tailor]. I paid his bill when I sent your clothes. I was flush of money, and I am so still, to all the purposes of a single life; so give yourself no further concern about it. *The money would be superfluous to me if I had it.*"

"Coleridge, continue to write; but do not for ever offend me by talking of sending me cash. *Sincerely, and on my soul, we do not want it.*"

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It was about this period that a very serious accident befell John Lamb: he injured his leg severely. The relations between him and the others had never been particularly cordial; but it was there that he went to be nursed in his sickness, and there, I collect, that he remained till his convalescence. Lamb's expression of anxiety for his brother's reason under this trial shows plainly enough how keenly conscious he was of the family tendency to mental disorder:

"First let me thank you," he says, "again and again, in my own and my sister's name, for your invitations; nothing could give us more pleasure than to come; but (were there no other reasons), while my brother's leg is so bad, it is out of the question. Poor fellow! he is very feverish and light-headed; but Cruikshanks has pronounced the symptoms favourable, and gives us every hope that there will be no need of amputation. God send not! We are necessarily confined with him all the afternoon and evening till very late, so that I am stealing a minute to write to you."

A favourable impression is certainly not left upon the mind, after gleaning such few particulars as are any how accessible of the character and career of Charles's elder brother.* Yet, while it is known to us, almost for a fact, that John did not behave well to his family, it is to be said to Charles's singular honour, that in no single

* Miss Lamb, in her poem called "The Broken Doll," seems almost to portray the bachelor-brother who lived away from home, as she remembered him in very early times; if the hypothesis be correct, the child was father to the man:

> "We elder children, then, will smile
> At our dear little John awhile,
> And bear with him, *until he see*
> *There is a sweet felicity*
> *In pleasing more than only one,*
> *Dear little, craving, selfish John.*"

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instance, in no passage of his writings or correspondence, has he expressed himself in disparagement of, or discontent with, John. He was always a brother in his eyes—an elder brother—something half fraternal, half paternal; for John had reached to manhood before Charles was much more than a lad. Later in life, when the difference in their years was less marked, and when Charles might feel himself raised more to a level with John, by virtue of being both author and poet, he addressed to him that touching little sonnet, which opens with—

> "John, you were figuring in the gay career
> Of blooming manhood, with a young man's joy,
> When I was yet a little peevish boy."*

Talfourd's running commentary upon the Letters might well have been more copious and suggestive, particularly as regards this early correspondence with Coleridge. There are passages here, thick and threefold, which illustrate very remarkably Lamb's early feelings, the character of his relations with Coleridge, and their mutual influence over each other. Assuredly, when we look at the ages of the writers, it is to be confessed that, in the whole compass of epistolary literature, there are few finer compositions than these. I am still alluding to the letters which Lamb wrote to Coleridge before 1800.

I can perfectly understand that this early Coleridge correspondence does not exhibit Lamb in so *popular* a light as some of the playful and humorous effusions which, later on in life, he was in the habit of addressing to his friends and acquaintances; but the correspondence holds a place of its own in his life and in his remains; there is something peculiarly tender and winning in the

* The portrait of John Lamb is painted pretty much *ad vivum* in "My Relations" (*Elia*, 1823). Talfourd relates that John Lamb would hold arguments with Hazlitt on subjects connected with the Fine Arts.

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unreserved interchange of opinions and thoughts by these two men, while they were still full of *Salutation-and-Cat* memories, and before the fame of either of them had well dawned.

Comparatively obscure in the eyes of the world, however, as Coleridge may have been in the last years of the eighteenth century, his friendship was all in all to Lamb, who had, as may be presently seen, golden opinions of his *quondam* schoolmate, and now familiar correspondent, and, which was more, literary associate. He says: "I can scarce bring myself to believe that I am admitted to a familiar correspondence, and all the license of friendship, with a man who writes blank verse like Milton."*

But perhaps the most curious feature in the correspondence is the umbrage which the Lambs, brother and sister, appear to have taken to Coleridge's free-speaking on religious matters. They liked his letters, with this reservation—that they occasionally met with sentiments which struck them as heterodox. Charles, in one instance, explicitly says:

"Especially they [C.'s letters] please us two, when you talk in a religious strain; not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism, more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy than consistent with the humility of genuine piety."

In a conversation which took place between Coleridge and Joseph Cottle, at Bristol, shortly after the return of the former from Malta, there was some reference introduced by Coleridge to his own character and foibles. He observed to Cottle, according to a passage in the *Early Recollections*, that "naturally he (Cole-

* This judgment of Lamb's, however, it must be said, has not been affirmed by posterity. We have learned to discriminate.

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ridge) was very arrogant; that it was his easily besetting sin; a state of mind which, he said, he ascribed to the severe subjection to which he had been exposed till he was fourteen years of age, and from which his own consciousness of superiority made him revolt."

There is no reasonable doubt that Cottle reports correctly what fell from his friend on that occasion; and we have, or seem to have, here a sort of key to an incident in Lamb's history, which has suffered very much from misinterpretation. Lamb, in a letter to Southey of July 28, 1798, says: "Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to the eternal regret of his native Devonshire, emigrates to Westphalia. 'Poor Lamb!' (these were his last words), 'if he wants any *knowledge*, he may apply to me.' In ordinary cases, I thanked him: I have an Encyclopædia at hand; but on such an occasion as going over to a German university, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Göttingen." Then follow the rather well-known *Theses quædam theologicæ:* "Whether God loves a lying angel," &c.; and Lamb concludes with: "Samuel Taylor hath not deigned an answer; was it impertinent of me to avail myself of this offered source of knowledge?"

I do not know what Southey's view may have been, or whether he replied, although I have waded through ten octavo volumes of his Correspondence, in the endeavour to ascertain; but Cottle, who speaks from personal information, and was, in fact, an eye- and ear-witness of Coleridge's contemporary impressions upon the matter, says: "Mr. Coleridge gave me this letter, saying, 'These young visionaries [Lamb and Lloyd] will do each other no good;'" and he adds, that Coleridge at first seemed greatly hurt, but that the feeling soon subsided.

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The whole thing appears to lie in a nutshell. Coleridge, on the eve of his departure for Germany, sent word to Lamb in a semi-serious mood, to the effect above referred to; and Lamb, in an overflow of humour, in which the slightest possible admixture of spleen was to be detected perhaps, retorted with his *Theses*. It was a light summer-cloud casting its momentary shade over a friendship which was to be life-long; and it is a pity that Elia's last biographer—the person most competent to set the question at rest for ever, by putting it before us in its true light—should have contented himself with remarking: "I must believe that this message was jocose, otherwise it would have been insolent in the extreme degree!"

The friendship between Lamb and Southey was formed in 1797. Southey had not *known* Lamb previously, and knew very little indeed of Charles Lloyd, when the latter came down to visit him at Burton, near Christchurch, in Hampshire. Southey, in a letter to Moxon the publisher, many years afterwards, says:

"I was lodging in a very humble cottage. This was in the summer of 1797; and then, or in the following year, my correspondence with him began. I saw more of him in 1802 than at any other time, for I was then six months resident in London."

But Southey was more or less slightly acquainted with Lamb two or three years before this date; and particularly mentions, in the same letter to Mr. Moxon, having seen the family, Charles included, one evening, while they were lodging in Little Queen Street, Holborn.* "The father and mother were both living,"

* To this humble dwelling-place of his childhood, Lamb ever looked back with true, large-hearted fondness; and once he was found, when missed from home, in the immediate neighbourhood of those scenes which he has portrayed so well in *Elia*.

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he writes, "and I have some dim recollection of the latter's invalid appearance. The father's senses had failed him before this time. He published some poems in quarto. Lamb showed me once an imperfect copy: 'The Sparrow's Wedding' was the title of the longest piece, and this was the author's favourite; he liked, in his dotage, to hear Charles read it."*

The date of Southey's first visit to the Lambs may be assigned, with tolerable safety, to 1795, or the beginning of 1796. As I have already suggested, Coleridge was probably the means of bringing Lamb into relations with Southey, as he had been instrumental in making the former known to Lloyd, Wordsworth, and Hazlitt.

From 1795 to 1804, there is a good deal in Lamb's life that has to be cleared up, if possible. For instance, we are aware that George Burnett, editor of *Specimens of the English Prose-Writers*,† was in the constant habit, at one time, of going to Lamb for his assistance and advice. It would appear that Burnett had expressed a desire to embrace the precarious pursuits of literature, in preference to permanent official employment; and that "Clio" Rickman,‡ Lamb's friend as well as Southey's, and

* Southey states as a fact here, that the *Falstaff Letters* were the joint production of Lamb and White. At the time, they were erroneously given to Lamb alone; now they seem to be given to White alone—equally in error, if Southey's information was correct.

† 1807, 3 vols. 8vo. Burnett was to have joined the new Utopia at one time contemplated by Coleridge, Southey, and a few others.

‡ John Rickman, Esq., of the House of Commons. In 1803, Mr. Rickman published *Poetical Scraps*, 2 vols. 8vo; which procured him the nickname of *Clio* Rickman. In 1807, a portrait of Mr. Rickman, by Mr. John Hazlitt, was exhibited at the Royal Academy. It is now in my possession. There is another and larger likeness in oils, by S. Lane, which has been engraved. Rickman assisted in preparing the censuses for 1801, 1811, 1821, and 1831. There is a long letter from him to the authorities of Bodmin on the subject, printed in the *Bodmin Register*.



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secretary to the Speaker of the House of Commons, had dissuaded him from his design.

"This morning," writes Southey to Rickman, Nov. 27, 1801, "I called on Burnett, whom I found recovering from a bilious flux, and in the act of folding up a letter designed for you. He then, for the first time, showed me your letter, and his reply. I perceived that the provoking blunder in Lamb's direction affected the tone of yours, and that the seventeen-shillings'-worth of anger fell upon George. . . . That your phrases were too harsh, I think, and Lamb and Mary Lamb think also. 'Twas a horse-medicine—a cruel dose of yellow *gamboodge*."

Some person possessing a key to all this would oblige the literary world by explaining; and there may be such still among us.

It seems to be a testimony to the growing repute which the set, of which Lamb was one, had attained in 1798, that in that year four of them—Coleridge, Southey, Lamb, and Lloyd—were introduced together into a caricature by Gilray. Of this print—which is, perhaps, the rarest of all the artist's productions—an accurate engraving accompanies these observations. Coleridge and Southey are represented with asses' heads, Lamb as a frog, and Lloyd as a toad. The satire had its origin in the deep odium into which the real or supposed (in poor Lamb's case, certainly, *supposed*) advocates of revolution had fallen about this time; and it made its first appearance in one of the January numbers of the *Anti-Jacobin Review* for the year in question. It is to this that Mr. Procter refers when he says, in his *Memoir of Lamb*, 1866: "Godwin had been introduced to Lamb by Coleridge in 1800. The first interview is made memorable by Godwin's opening question: 'And, pray, Mr. Lamb, are you toad or frog?' This inquiry, having

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reference to Gilray's offensive caricature, did not afford promise of a very cheerful intimacy." Surely, if Gilray's caricature was offensive, Godwin's question was ten times more so. But the notion of portraying Lamb himself as a frog was, so far, a happy one: his spare figure and unmistakable lineaments assisted the artist, and gave special vehemence to the infamous personality.

But, after all, the most curious part of the matter is, that the most eminent caricaturist of his time, who, generally speaking, occupied himself with the leading public characters and topics of the day, should have selected for treatment four persons then so comparatively obscure, and, as one might have supposed, insignificant. We have only to assume that symptoms had developed themselves thus early of a dangerous tendency to cohesion in the (so-called) Jacobin party, to which Coleridge and his friends were known to belong; and that an additional provocation to expose them to ridicule was furnished by the Utopian scheme broached by some of them, of emigrating to the New World, and founding on the other shore of the Atlantic a model republic. To this communistic bubble* there is a reference in another of Gilray's drawings, "The Friend of Humanity."

It is scarcely necessary to point out that what, at the period of its publication, was an indelicate and obnoxious libel, has mellowed, in the course of half a century or upward, into a mere curiosity of art and literature; and it was thought that Gilray's print might be admitted into the present volume, as an average specimen of the savage

* An amusing circumstance in connection with this temporary illusion is noticeable in the strictly democratic fashion in which Lamb indorsed his letters at this date to Southey and Coleridge. It was not even Mr. Southey or Mr. Coleridge—not so much as Citizen A. or B.; but plain *Robert Southey* and *S. T. Coleridge.* Titles were abandoned by the intending emigrants, in anticipation of that perfect equality, which was to reign in the new Transatlantic home of the fraternity.

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virulence (mixed with puerile silliness) with which any persons entertaining and expressing unofficial opinions were assailed by government understrappers of every type and grade, "when George the Third was king."

Southey and Lamb met, perhaps, once more in London, in 1799: for the former, in a letter to a relative, observes: "To-morrow I may, perhaps, hear from him [Lloyd], as I purpose calling on Charles Lamb. Plague on it! it is Whit-Monday, I recollect, and I know not where to find him." Did he think, one may wonder, of trying Little Queen Street again?

When Southey spoke of 1802 to his correspondent as the year in which he saw most of the Lambs in London, should he not have said rather the winter of 1801? At any rate, I observe that, in a letter of December in this year to Mr. Charles Danvers, he mentions seeing much of Charles and his sister at that time; these are his words: "Lamb and his sister see us often; he is printing his play,* which will please you by the exquisite beauty of its poetry, and provoke you by the exquisite silliness of its story. Godwin, who often visits him, has a trick of always falling asleep for some *hour* after supper. One night, Lamb was at Godwin's, with the Mr. Fell whose dull *Tour through the Batavian Republic* I saw at your house, when the philosopher was napping there as usual; they carried off his rum, brandy, sugar, picked his pockets of every thing, and made off in triumph."

A large proportion of Lamb's writings, both epistolary and otherwise, are contained in fly-sheets and soiled office-paper, which had probably been condemned as waste. His stationer's account cannot ever have been very considerable. At this habit he points in his Essay on "Oxford in the Vacation;" where he says that "your outside

* *John Woodvil.*

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sheets and waste wrappers of foolscap do receive into them, most kindly and naturally, the impression of sonnets, epigrams, *essays*—so that the very parings of a counting-house are, in some sort, the settings-up of an author."*

Perhaps Lamb's idiosyncrasies of style and manner in writing have been held up a little too much as peculiar to himself, as exclusively *Lamby*. Now, if I am not deceived, there is a good deal of the same sort of quaint delivery of ideas, and of dry, incrusted humour, in some of the early letters of Southey. Take, for instance, part of one written during his short Irish secretaryship to Rickman (Nov. 20, 1801): "On three subjects, he (the secretary or *scribe*) is directed to read and research—corn-laws, &c. Alas, they are heathen Greek to the scribe!" Then, again, in a letter to Mrs. Southey, Oct. 16, 1801: "John Rickman is a great man in Dublin, and in the eyes of the world, but not one jot altered from the John Rickman of Christchurch, save only that, in compliance with an extorted promise, he has deprived himself of the pleasure of scratching his head, by putting powder in it." A third specimen is from a communication to Mr. Bedford about the *Annual Anthology*—to which Lamb, by the by, was a contributor. "*De Anthologiâ*, which is, 'of, or concerning, the *Anthology*.' As I hope to be picking up lava from Etna, I cannot be tying up nosegays here in England; but Tobin, whom you know—God bless him for a very good fellow!—but Tobin the blind is very unwilling that

* Lamb's style, even for his own age, had an antique cast and tone about it, not wholly unaffected or unintentional. It would surprise many readers to see a list drawn up of such words as are scattered through the two series of *Elia*, and as will be barely intelligible, in the sense in which the writer employed them, to the generation now springing up. I see the remote possibility of a glossary to the *Essays*, of a Lamb *cum notis variorum!*

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no more *Anthologies* should appear; wherefore, there will be more volumes, with which all I shall have to do will be to see that large-paper copies be printed to continue sets, becoming myself only a gentleman contributor: to which ingenious publication I beg your countenance, sir, and support." Once more, to Coleridge, March 28, 1801, from Lisbon: "The sight of your handwriting did not give me much pleasure: 'twas the leg of a lark to a hungry man—yet it was your handwriting."

One can scarcely help feeling that, if Lamb owed to Coleridge the earliest expansion and enrichment of his mind, and to Southey something of that humour and habit of putting thoughts and images into quaint, modern-antique clothing, he was also not altogether without obligations to James White, author of the *Falstaff Letters.** It was when Lamb and his family were in Little Queen Street, and their fortunes were at the lowest ebb, that White published this little volume. Its sale was nominal. Its fate, as I before noticed, was curious. Some thought it to be Lamb's; others thought it to be White's; a few (and these were on the right scent) deemed it to be a partnership to which Lamb had contributed suggestions, and White the remainder. I shall print presently an inedited letter from the late John Mathew Gutch to the late Dr. Bliss, of St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, which seems to throw more certain light on this question of the divided authorship of the *Letters*.

* Lamb, in one of the *Essays of Elia* (1823), complains that White carried away half of the fun of the world when he died—"of my world, at least." He goes on to say: "My pleasant friend, Jem White, was so impressed with a belief of metamorphoses like this frequently taking place, that, in some sort to reverse the wrongs of fortune in these poor changelings, he instituted an annual feast of chimney-sweepers, at which it was his pleasure to officiate as host and waiter. It was a solemn supper held in Smithfield, upon the yearly return of the fair of St. Bartholomew."

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# ELIA.

ESSAYS WHICH HAVE APPEARED UNDER THAT SIGNATURE

IN THE

LONDON MAGAZINE.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR TAYLOR AND HESSEY,

FLEET-STREET.

1823.

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Lamb's naturally cheerful (and almost mercurial) temperament receives, perhaps, its earliest illustration from his concern in the book referred to. At a point of time when we know that he was in circumstances of the utmost indigence and domestic wretchedness, he could summon animal spirits to take an active interest in a publication which was not in the least degree likely to be remunerative, and which was merely a facetious literary hoax. I do not at all know what Lamb's personal views may have been; but it has been conjectured that White was induced to embark in the undertaking to denote his contempt for the Ireland forgeries, and derision of the public credulity. But he could hardly have expected that the world would take so many years to come at the true character of his own performance, and that, at the sale of the Duke of Roxburghe's library, as late as 1812, a copy would fetch a ridiculous sum as the genuine Falstaff Correspondence. The purchaser shall be nameless!

Spurious as White's lucubration was, and unsatisfactory, in some respects, as we may consider Lamb's connection with it to have been, we must not be sure that it has not the merit of having first directed the attention of the latter to Shakespearian letters. For White was an earnest and warm admirer of the great poet,—of which fact Mr. Gutch's letter will be found to afford a confirmation,—and his acquaintance with Lamb had not improbably the useful effect of imparting a share of this enthusiasm and love.

Mr. Gutch's letter runs as follows:

"My dear Bliss, "Common Hill, April 2, '52.

"The best reply I can make to your inquiry is to send you the following extract from my copy of the *Falstaff Letters*, written upon the fly-page:

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"'These Letters were the production of my old schoolfellow James White, with incidental hints and corrections by another schoolfellow, Charles Lamb.'

"Among his friends, White was familiarly called 'Sir John.' I was present with him at a masquerade when he personated Sir John Falstaff, in a dress borrowed from the wardrobe of Covent-Garden Theatre, thro' the kindness of Fawcett, the comedian. His imitation of the character—or, I should say, personation—excited great mirth and applause, as well as considerable jealousy from some of the company present,—supposed to be hired actors for the occasion,—who, with much ill-will, procured a rope, and held it across the room (at the Pantheon, in Oxford Street), and White was obliged to take a leap over the rope to escape being thrown down. The exertion he underwent by this interruption, added to the weight of the dress, injured his health for some days afterwards.

"We were at this time in the habit of meeting at the *Feather*, in Hand Court, Holborn, to drink nips of Burton ale, as they were called. One of our friends, who was particularly fond of the beverage, was called 'Nipperkin.'

"White was a remarkably open-hearted, joyous companion; very intimate with the Lamb family, who were then lodging in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.*

"White married a daughter of Faulder's', the bookseller, the fortunate purchaser of the copyright of Paley's works. He [Faulder's] died, I think, in 1822, leaving a widow and three children. White was an idoliser of Shakespeare. He had always several of his expressions

* "In *Little* Queen Street: it was there the Lambs were living when the mother was killed."—*Note at foot of the letter, by another hand.*

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and epithets at his ready command, and generally interlarded his conversation with them.

"If you have Talfourd's *Final Memorials* at hand, you will find, at pp. 87, 88, some mention made of your humble servant's intimacy with Lamb, the remembrance of which is always a gratifying incident in my life.

"I am always glad, my old friend, to see your well-known hand, and to subscribe myself

"Most sincerely yours,

"J. M. GUTCH."

A second edition of the *Falstaff Letters* appeared in 1797, price 3*s.* 6*d.* On the fly-leaf of Mr. Gutch's copy, now before me, somebody inquires: "Is not the germ of Elia's inimitable production upon Roast Pig to be found at p. xii. of the Preface?" It really seems not unlikely that such was the case. Who knows but that Lamb was part-author of that same Preface? An interesting problem, indeed, when we reflect that, of all Eliana, this "Disquisition upon Roast Pig" is very nearly the most familiar and dear to us all (if it were not for Mrs. Battle and the old Blue-coat School Memories); and perhaps—*nemo scit quominus*—those astounding revelations on the first principles of Crackling were in embryo in the author's brain, years upon years before they were matured and presented to the world!

Lamb himself once put a shilling to a friend's sixpence, and urged him to secure a copy of *Falstaff* which he had seen in a window. But nowadays the book is common enough; and such as entertain a curiosity regarding the *prima stamina* of great men's more famous works, may consult at their leisure the passage indicated, and judge for themselves.

But the truth is, that another and somewhat different

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suggestion has to be advanced. In the autumn of 1799, according to Talfourd, Lamb first became acquainted with Mr. Thomas Manning, a mathematical tutor at Cambridge—the "Trismegistus" of the Letters. How soon after that date the Dissertation was meditated and finally composed, there are no data to assist us in ascertaining; but it is tolerably certain that the essay was not written till Manning had returned from China; or, at all events, till he went there in 1806. The article opens with the following sentence: "Mankind, says a *Chinese manuscript* which my friend M[anning] was obliging enough *to read and explain to me*, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw." What will be said when it is stated that that Chinese manuscript is in existence? What, when it is stated that it is no Chinese MS.? What, when it is stated that it is not even a MS. at all, but a printed book, written *in Italian verse*, and entitled, *The Praises of the Pig?** That Bistonio's poem is the *Chinese MS. read and explained* to Lamb by Manning, either about the time of his trip to China, or after his return, appears to me, from the close resemblances between passages and expressions in the Italian (of which Lamb, I believe, did not understand a syllable: it was as good as *Chinese* to *him*) and the English, so extremely probable, that it amounts to something almost like a certainty.

In connection with the "Dissertation on Roast Pig," it may be worth while to call attention to a paper in Hone's *Table Book*, headed "The Turk in Cheapside," addressed to Lamb. It purports to proceed from the

* *Gli Elogi del Porco Capitoli Berneschi di Tigrinio Bistonio, &c.* In Modena, &c. MDCCLXI. 4to. With a coloured figure of a pig on the title, within an ornamental border. The copy before me, which had been Lamb's, was given by the late Mr. Moxon to the gentleman whose kindness places it at my disposal for the present purpose. It is a poem in three-line stanzas.

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Man[illegible]ing enough to read and explain
to me[illegible] biting it from the living
animal obscurely hinted at by
the[illegible]ions, where he designates a
kind[illegible]y. The Manuscript goes
on t[illegible]e to be the elder brother),
was [illegible]e-herd Ho-ti having
gone [illegible]mast for his hogs, left his
cott[illegible] being fond of playing
with[illegible]pe into a bundle of straw,
[illegible]sued.

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pen of "E. C., M.D.;" and is dated January 31, 1827. But, if I am not mistaken to more than a trifling extent, this effusion is Lamb's own composition: if it be not, it is a not unhappy imitation of his manner.

E. C. urges Elia—if he is still Elia—to write something for the *Table Book* about the Turk who used to sell rhubarb in Cheapside, and who now, as E. C. is told, is no more. "Take this matter upon thee speedily," says E. C.; "wilt thou not indorse thy Pegasus with this pleasant fardel? . . . An thou wilt not, I shall be malicious, and wish thee some trifling evil, to wit—by way of revenge for the appetite which thou hast created among the reading public for the infant progeny, the rising generation of swine, I will wish that some of the old demoniac leaven may rise up against thee in the modern pigs, that thy sleep may be vexed with swinish visions. . . . Finally, I will wish that when next G. D.* visits thee, he may, by mistake, take away thy hat, and leave thee his own. Think of that, Master Brook!"

I have already alluded to a passage in the preface to the *Falstaff Letters*, 1796, as not unlikely to have proceeded from Lamb's pen; and, in such case, as being entitled to the honour of being looked on in future as the first rough outline of this notable paper on Pig. I have merely to add here, that in a letter to Hazlitt, of the 28th November, 1810, the same affection towards this porcine topic peeps out in manner following: "We have received your pig," says he to his correspondent, "and return you thanks; it will be drest in due form, with appropriate sauce, this day."

The letter is rather a melancholy messenger, for it

* George Dyer. Dyer, paying a visit to an acquaintance, took away the man-servant's hat, with a cockade, and left his own behind him. He did not discover his mistake till he was met by a friend, who sympathised with him on the change in his social position!

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brings tidings of one of Miss Lamb's deplorable illnesses; but, nevertheless, it must be opened, to allow latest intelligence concerning the pig to travel down to Wiltshire by that mail. "I just open it," he adds, "to say, the pig, upon proof, hath turned out as good as I predicted: my fauces yet retain the sweet porcine odour." Then comes a second postscript: "Mrs. Reynolds, who is a *sage* woman, approves of the pig."

These memorabilia, with which I have now done, may be of interest to those persons who have perused Lamb's erudite investigation into the origin and nature of Crackling.

It is highly requisite to read the more personal Essays without skipping: they are full of pertinence. One or two of them depict for us—as they are nowhere else, and by nobody else, depicted—Lamb's Blue-coat-School days. Others, as that on "Old China," portray uniquely the unhappy struggles of early life, which yet seemed happy in retrospect. Take the history of the acquiring of the Beaumont and Fletcher. What can be more touching—what truer to life? Then, in the "Praise of Chimney-sweepers," we get at a biographical incident which, I am quite sure, has never been yet dwelt upon sufficiently, or, at least, has not been painted into the foreground of the picture.

The banquet there referred to was served upon three long tables: at one presided Jem White himself, the host of the evening; at the second, Ralph Bigod—that Bigod (or, more truly, *Fenwick*) who came of ducal ancestors, and, in "The Two Races of Men," is put forward as the type of the *Borrowers;* and the remaining table was superintended by Lamb, who did the honours of the occasion, and, for courtesy's sake, could not well forbear to partake of the delicacies set before the motley company. But this was in *Salutation-and-Cat* days.

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Interior of the *Salutation and Cat*, as remembered by a frequenter of the house for over forty years.

Corner of Russell Street.

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I may be deceived in supposing that the origin of Lamb's peculiar vein of humour has never been investigated or pointed out; but I do not recollect, for my part, to have seen the probable source of those punning pleasantries of his suggested any where. It is my belief that his earliest efforts in this direction were imitations of the extraordinary propensity possessed, according to Lamb himself, by his old schoolfellow, Samuel Le Grice; which has given Lamb celebrity among us for many witticisms which he did utter, and for many which he did not. If it be as I conjecture, the pupil eclipsed his master, and overshadowed him. The sayings of the former are proverbial; those of Le Grice, if they could be repeated, would at least have the fascination of novelty.

Lamb, in one letter to a friend, observes: "Le Grice has gone to make puns in Cornwall." And again, a little later, we meet with the following passage in another: "I saw Le Grice the day before his departure [for Cornwall], and mentioned incidentally his 'teaching the young idea how to shoot.' *Knowing the probability there is of people having a propensity to pun in his company*, you will not wonder that we both stumbled on the same pun at once, he eagerly anticipating me," &c.

Looking still at the sources of Lamb's literary and poetical inspiration, it has to be added, that he can by no means be said truly to have owed every thing to his scholastic culture, and his subsequent association with such spirits as Coleridge, Southey, Le Grice, and James White. One powerful piece of evidence to the contrary is to be found in the fact that his sister, who had not had similar advantages and stimulants, displayed a cognate order of mind, and—save the mark!—within a few points, the same striking intellectual endowments.

We know that old Mr. Lamb was a second Dodsley, livery-servant and bard. The seeds of that versifying

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frenzy, which developed itself so early in Charles, and was brought by him to a greater perfection, to a higher maturity (as might well be), were in the father. The result of Mr. Lamb's poetical lucubrations was given to the world in the volume of which an imperfect copy was once shown by Charles to Southey. It may almost be doubted whether a copy, perfect or imperfect, exists at present; but the whole collection seems to have been extraordinary and eccentric in its character: and we are compelled to an inference, that Charles and his sister inherited from their father, not only their native mental refinement and power, but that taint in their blood which, in the case of one of them, took the form of actual and fatal insanity.

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# A TALE

OF

# ROSAMUND GRAY

AND

# *Old Blind Margaret.*

BY CHARLES LAMB.

*LONDON,*
PRINTED FOR LEE AND HURST,
NO. 32, PATER-NOSTER ROW

1798.

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## CHAPTER III.

Lamb's early works—*Rosamund Gray*—*Tales from Shakespeare*—*Adventures of Ulysses*—*Poetry for Children*—Operas. (1798-1800.)

I TRUST that I shall not be thought to have done an ungracious thing, if I venture to demur to the rather loose fashion in which Barry Cornwall describes the early works of Lamb. How surprising it seems, in the first place, that Barry Cornwall should not have mentioned that the tale of *Rosamund Gray*, printed in 1798, price half-a-crown, and Lamb's second, if not third, appearance in type, was laid—where Rosamund's cottage is still shown—at Blenheims, two cottages near Healin Green, about two miles from Blakesware, or Blakesweir; and that Lamb borrowed the name of his heroine, in all likelihood, from the song of *Rosamund Gray*, which is to be found in a volume of poems by Charles Lloyd, published at Carlisle in 1795.* Lamb's story met with early appreciation, and preserved its popularity among the author's select admirers, if such kind of fame may be properly so called. Shelley, in a letter to Leigh Hunt, Sept. 8, 1819, acknowledges the receipt, among other books, of Lamb's *Works*, 2 vols. 12mo, 1818. He observes: "What a

* The first stanza runs as follows:

"Let the pander of vice and the minion of power
Claim the blasphemous boon of a verse;
Let the poet who sings for the infamous dower,
Ambition's mad actions rehearse:
The child of misfortune, who's bent to the earth,
Shall live in my incondite lay;
I'll boast the intuitive feelings of worth—
The virtues of Rosamund Gray."

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lovely thing is *Rosamund Gray!* How much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest parts of our nature is in it! When I think of such a mind as Lamb's—when I see how unnoticed remain things of such exquisite and complete perfection—what should I hope for myself, if I had not higher objects in view than fame?"

A certain share of unnecessary obscurity and confusion appears to have hitherto prevailed regarding the earliest publications with which the name of Lamb is connected. In the years 1796, 1797, and 1798 respectively were published three duodecimo volumes, to which Lamb contributed more or less: the probability seems to be, that few persons have been at the pains to compare, side by side, these now somewhat scarce little books; and, as one help towards an elucidation of their general character, an exact facsimile of the title-page of each would not, it was thought, be, under all the circumstances, out of place.

The first volume is nothing more than the edition of Coleridge's Poems issued in 1796; in the preface to which the author remarks: "The effusions signed C. L. were written by Mr. Charles Lamb, of the India House. Independently of the signature, their superior merit would have sufficiently distinguished them." These effusions are three in number, and are followed by some lines "Written at Midnight by the Sea-side, after a Voyage," also subscribed with Lamb's initials.

In the succeeding year, Coleridge reprinted his Poems, and annexed a new Introduction (at the same time retaining the old one). Here we meet with an explanatory paragraph, to the ensuing effect: "There were inserted, in my former Edition, a few Sonnets of my Friend and old School-fellow, Charles Lamb. He has now communicated to me a complete Collection of all his Poems; *quæ qui non prorsus amet, illum omnes et virtutes*

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# POEMS,

BY

## *S. T. COLERIDGE,*

*SECOND EDITION*

TO WHICH ARE NOW ADDED

# POEMS

*By CHARLES LAMB,*

AND

*CHARLES LLOYD.*

Duplex nobis vinculum, et amicitiæ et similium junctarumque Camœnarum; quod utinam neque mors solvat, neque temporis longinquitas!

*Grascoll Epist. ad Car. Utenhov. et Ptol. Lux. Interp.*

PRINTED BY N. BIGGS,
FOR J. COTTLE, BRISTOL AND MESSRS.
ROBINSONS, LONDON.
1797.

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*et veneres odere.*" These productions commence with a new half-title on p. 215, with a motto from Massinger, and a dedication to Miss Lamb. The terms of the latter are worth perpetuation: "The Few Following Poems, Creatures of the Fancy and the Feeling, in Life's more *vacant* Hours: Produced, for the most part, by Love in Idleness; are, with all a Brother's fondness, inscribed to Mary Ann Lamb, the Author's best Friend and Sister." This was in 1797. The Sonnets printed in 1796 reappear in the enlarged collection, with certain alterations. The Sonnets are all of interest, from their evidently autobiographical complexion; and the same is to be said of the lines, "To Charles Lloyd, an Unexpected Visitor."

Unlike its two predecessors, the volume which was ushered into the world in 1798 consisted of new matter entirely, and was confined to blank verse. Lamb and Lloyd had dissolved partnership with Coleridge; and instead of coming out for the third time "under cover of the greater Ajax," Lamb launched his new poetical venture in concert with Lloyd alone. The Sonnets attached to Coleridge's Poems in 1796 formed, in short, a specimen of what Lamb published in a more complete shape in 1797, in the tripartite volume, to which Coleridge was still by far the largest contributor. The blank verse communicated to the world in 1798, in conjunction with Lloyd, was an independent and perfectly distinct work, and borrowed nothing from its predecessors. If I were not afraid of being charged with hypercriticism, and a too microscopic propensity, I should be tempted to express a desire and a hope that whenever a final edition of Lamb's works shall be prepared, the superintendent of it will examine carefully all these *prima stamina* of the Elian muse, and restore, where it may seem expedient, readings which the author



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perhaps too fastidiously rejected, or will at least give them in notes.

The *Specimens of Dramatic Poets* appeared in 1808, in one volume 8vo, at half-a-guinea, and they were never republished during the editor's lifetime; but in 1813 a new title-page was printed for the unsold copies. The "Extracts from the Garrick Plays," which form a sequel to the *Specimens*, were contributed to the *Table Book*.

The *Adventures of Ulysses* were published during the same year (1808), at four shillings, with "a superb frontispiece." The book is a moderate-sized octavo, with an engraved and a printed title, and a frontispiece. The engraving on the title and the frontispiece were from designs by Corbould, and were engraved by Heath. The frontispiece represents Ulysses compelling Circe to restore his companions to their shapes. The printed title reads as follows: "*The Adventures of Ulysses.* By Charles Lamb. London: printed by T. Davison, Whitefriars, for the Juvenile Library, No. 41 Skinner Street, Snow Hill. 1808." Lamb, in the preface, thus explains the object of the publication: "This work is designed as a supplement to the *Adventures of Telemachus.* It treats of the conduct and sufferings of Ulysses, the father of Telemachus."*

It would take a great deal to persuade me that the *Adventures of Ulysses* have not, running through them, a rich vein of true pathos; for I have perused, two or three times, this prose paraphrase of the *Odyssey*, intended "for the use of young persons," and I have never

* Mr. Babson, of Chelsea, N.E., editor of *Eliana*, 1864, inadvertently printed the *Adventures of Ulysses* in his volume as an uncollected production; but it is to be found in Lamb's *Works*, 1840. It is to be regretted that the text of *Eliana* is so incorrect.

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# MRS. LEICESTER'S SCHOOL:

OR,

# THE HISTORY

OF

# SEVERAL YOUNG LADIES,

RELATED BY THEMSELVES.

THIRD EDITION.

London:

PRINTED FOR M. J. GODWIN, AT THE JUVENILE LIBRARY, NO. 41, SKINNER-STREET.

1810.

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# SPECIMENS

OF

# ENGLISH DRAMATIC POETS,

WHO LIVED

## About the Time of Shakspeare:

WITH NOTES

By CHARLES LAMB

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME.
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1808.

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laid the little volume down with dry eyes. It may be that my nature is more than usually impressionable; but, I confess, I would prefer to think that it was because the narrative was naturally and movingly conducted.

*Mrs. Leicester's School*, first issued in 1808, was reprinted the same year, and again in 1810, and reached a *fourth* edition in 1814.*

In a letter to Manning, of January 2, 1810, Lamb says: "There comes with this, two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to *Mrs. Leicester:* the best, you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's. You may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you, mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole." Lamb's remarks refer to the publication of a little work, entitled *Poetry for Children; entirely Original;* 1809; two volumes duodecimo,—at the modest price of three shillings. It was a joint-stock affair, as we see. It appears, from a notice at the end of Godwin's *Essay on Sepulchres*, 1809, in a list of advertisements, that the *Poetry for Children* was then *out of print*, but that (another novel piece of intelligence)

* The book had reached a *tenth* edition before 1828; for, at the end of a volume printed in that year, this edition is advertised as on sale, "price 4*s.*, fancy half-binding." *Mrs. Leicester's School* is dedicated to the ladies of "Amwell School," whence the Lambs may have derived the first hint for the work. But I think I discern a trace of the existence of the notion in the minds of the authors ten years earlier—in the Letters of Elinor Clare, printed in *Rosamund Gray*, 1798. With the exception of three of the stories—"Maria Howe," "Susan Yates," and "Arabella Hardy"—the volume was Miss Lamb's composition. On the back of the Contents to the edition of 1810, is a printed extract from the *Critical Review* for December, 1808, as follows: "With much satisfaction do we express our unqualified praise of these elegant and most instructive Tales. They are delightfully simple, and exquisitely told. . . . *Morose and crabbed censors as we are represented to be*, we closed the volume wishing there had been another, and lamenting that we had got to the end."

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the best pieces in the work might be found in another book, called *The First Book of Poetry*, by W. F. Mylius, 1810, 12mo.*

The edition of 1828 is the earliest of the work by Mylius which I have been able to see; and it contains the following articles by the Lambs, mixed up with similar pieces by Watts, Mrs. Hannah More, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Southey, Bloomfield, Mickle, Addison, Marlowe, and a number of other authors, old and new. By Charles Lamb: *A Birthday Thought*,† only. By Miss Lamb there are these:‡

Cleanliness.
Envy.
The Boy and Snake.§
The Beggar Man.
The Magpie's Nest: a Fable.
Time spent in Dress.
Nursing.
The Boy and the Skylark: a Fable.
The Broken Doll.
Going into Breeches.
Written in the first Leaf of a Child's Memorandum-book.
The Beasts in the Tower.
The first Tooth.
The Sister's Expostulation on the Brother's Learning Latin.
The Brother's Reply.
The Rainbow.

* *The Fir. Book of Poetry*; for the use of Schools. Intended as Reading Lessons for the Younger Classes. London, 1810, 12mo, 3*s*. Again in 1811, 12mo, &c. The edition of 1828 was the tenth.

† See Inedited Remains of Charles Lamb, *post*.

‡ See pp. 92-119.

§ The frontispiece forms an illustration of this.

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The Rook and the Sparrows.
Feigned Courage.
The Peach.
The first Sight of Green Fields.
Memory.
On the Lord's Prayer.

The truth is, that Mylius was also the compiler of the *Christ's-Hospital Dictionary of the English Language.* Intended for those by whom a Dictionary is used, as a Series of Daily Lessons. London, 1809, 12mo. Published at 2*s.* 6*d.* But there was an earlier edition: to this (the second), Edward Baldwin (*alias* W. Godwin) attached his *New Guide to the English Tongue.* In fact, Godwin was the publisher of these works by Mylius; and hence came the absorption of the Lambs' *Poetry for Children* in another work, and, it may be almost said, its complete eclipse and disappearance. I scarcely know, at the moment, whether there is in modern literature a second example of this burial alive of a book, on which both Lamb and his sister, we may not doubt, bestowed a good deal of thought and labour; for, as the title assures us, the poetry was "entirely original." After all, in the text-book by Mylius, we get only at "the best pieces"—what Mylius thought the best! *Cætera desunt.*

The *Critical Review* for January, 1811, spoke in encomiastic terms of this publication: "Nothing can be either more natural or more engaging than the subjects of these little poems. . . . It is impossible even for adult readers to be uninterested by the touching juvenile traits and anecdotes which these volumes contain."

The *Tales from Shakespeare* were completed in two volumes, small 8vo, in 1807; the price, "in extra

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boards," 8*s*. They reached a second edition in 1808, a third in 1816, a fourth in 1822, and so on. They were reprinted last year (1867). But it is not generally known, perhaps, that, previously to their circulation in a collective shape, Godwin, the publisher, and proprietor of the copyright, offered them to his juvenile patrons and patronesses at No. 41 Skinner Street, in sixpenny books, with the plates (by Blake) "beautifully coloured." A note attached to an original advertisement of the work sets forth that "A specimen of these *Tales* is just published, in eight single numbers; each number being adorned with three plates, beautifully coloured; price sixpence. The remainder will speedily follow."*

In one of Southey's letters touching on the early history of the Lambs, there are some remarks, which I have quoted, on Lamb's *John Woodvil*.

The following passage occurs in a letter from Southey to Coleridge, of October 16, 1801: "From Lamb's letter to Rickman, I learn that he means to print his play, which is the lukewarm *John*, whose plan is as obnoxious to Rickman as it was to you and me."

*John Woodvil* appeared in 1802, in a small 12mo volume, price three shillings. There was a notice of it in the *Annual Review*, which Lamb himself, and some of his friends, confidently attributed to Mrs. Barbauld. In

* An edition of 1831 is described on the title-page as the fifth. These *Tales* are reprinted in Lamb's *Works*, 1840; but were left out in the subsequent issues. The *Critical Review* for May, 1807, said: "We do not scruple to say that, unless perhaps we except *Robinson Crusoe*, these volumes claim the very first place, and stand unique, without rival or competitor."

The second edition was published at 10*s*.; and to Godwin's announcement of this reprint was attached this N.B.: "A Selection of Eight from these Twenty Tales is just published in 2 vols. 18mo, with Numerous Engravings, price 2*s*. each." So it seems pretty clear that, whatever Miss Lamb and her brother may have received for their work, the bookseller did not lose by it.

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# TALES

FROM

# *SHAKESPEAR.*

DESIGNED

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS,

By CHARLES LAMB.

*EMBELLISHED WITH COPPER-PLATES.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR THOMAS HODGKINS, AT THE JUVENILE LIBRARY, HANWAY-STREET (OPPOSITE SOHO SQUARE) OXFORD-STREET; AND TO BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1807.

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a letter to Coleridge of 1804, Southey says: "Why have you not made Lamb declare war upon Mrs. Barbauld? There is not a man in the world who could so well revenge himself." But the fact was, that the criticism was not written by Mrs. B. at all; and that lady had an opportunity of convincing the author it was so, when her brother Dr. Aikin and herself were introduced by a mutual friend.

This accomplished pair formed a very high opinion of Lamb's powers. The Doctor used to say, that he was the only prose writer who wrote with equal perfection three distinct styles—the humorous, the pathetic, and the logical; and Mrs. Barbauld would add, "He is the only writer who made me laugh and cry at the same time."

Lamb's second effort in the dramatic line—*John Woodvil*, though not printed till 1802, was ready two years before—was a prologue and epilogue to Godwin's play of *Antonio, or the Soldier's Return;* first performed at Drury Lane, Dec. 13, 1800. The author of *Antonio* promised himself a great triumph; Miss Lamb—truer prophet!—foretold his and her brother's common fate—(dramatic) damnation. The crisis was produced by Antonio plunging his sword into the heroine's bosom; and the unfortunate players were hooted from the stage.

Three days after (Dec. 16), Lamb writes to Manning: "We are damned! Not the facetious epilogue itself could save us. For, as the editor of the *Morning Post* —quick-sighted gentleman!—hath this morning truly observed (I beg pardon if I falsify his *words*, their profound *sense* I am sure I retain), both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece." I must honestly confess that I do not think the editor of the *Post* was very far wrong; but Godwin was, ap-

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parently, not of the same mind; for, when he printed his play, he left out Lamb's contribution to its failure.*

One of Lamb's most pleasing and most familiar essays in poetry is "The Farewell to Tobacco." He meditated it long—as much as two years—before he penned it. He seems to have almost felt that, in committing the "Farewell" to paper, and distributing it among his intimates, he was giving a sort of undertaking in writing to abstain ever after from the noxious weed, "his evening comfort and his morning curse for these five years," as he tells the Wordsworths (Sept. 29, 1805). He screwed up his courage to the sticking point, however, when he found that he could not get on with it; for, as he puts it, "tobacco stood in its own light, when it gave me headaches that prevented my singing its praises." So the pen was taken up, and the famous good-by poem was composed in earnest of the sacrifice and the parting. It is one of those very few pieces in metre which are worthy of the prose *Elia*, and deserve to be bound up with it. Lamb's poems, as a rule, are insipid, and *artificially natural;* he belongs to that school of which Ambrose Phillips is generally—though without sufficient ground, perhaps—regarded as the founder. Namby-pambyism is surely not so modern.

So far as the existing remains of the Lamb Correspondence allow us to form an opinion, I collect that, in the winter of 1808, if not in that of 1807 also, Charles himself was busily engaged, in conjunction with Tom Sheridan, in devising the plots of one or more comic pantomimes, as a mode of adding to his ways and means, then still scanty and insufficient enough. The younger Sheridan appears to have had by him, in a more or less incomplete form, certain dramatic, or

* This drama appeared in 1800, 8vo. A copy is among the Royal Pamphlets in the British Museum.

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*quasi*-dramatic, productions begun by his father, but left unfinished. One of these, I apprehend, was the burlesque opera of *Ixion*, of which a copy is in the British Museum, principally in a handwriting with which I am not acquainted; but with a marginal note or two by Lamb, a line substituted by him for one scored through, and the "Dramatis Personæ" drawn out on the second page in his most unmistakable autograph.

There is little doubt that Sheridan submitted this performance to Lamb for his corrections and suggestions in 1807 or 1808; but, beyond the few points which I have stated, there is no trace at present of the participation of the latter in the authorship.

Lamb's last biographer speaks "upon report" of a second and different production, likewise of an operatic character, as being in the national Library, and entirely in Lamb's autograph.

The drama thus passingly referred to has no title, and affords internally no evidence of the date or circumstances of its composition. It is laid in modern life. Lovelace, the hero, is a man of fortune in love with Violeta, the heroine. He enlists as a common soldier, and proceeds to Gibraltar, whither Violeta follows him disguised as an officer. The scene is Gibraltar throughout. There are a Major Aptjones and a Captain Lothian, officers of the garrison; the former supports the comic part.

The dialogue must be said to be of ordinary quality, and the plot is nothing more than the usual Curtain upon every body most unexpectedly made happy ever after. Something is deficient at the conclusion; but so much is to be gathered.

This anonymous play—perhaps the unassisted work of Lamb at a period when he was strangely sanguine of

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succeeding in a sphere of literature totally at variance with the true bent of his genius—is unstintingly interspersed with songs. If I allege that these are of a nature which disarms criticism, I must justify the observation by quoting *in extenso* the "Drummer's Song," which is, upon the whole, the best:

"Is there a life, pray tell me, girls,
That beats the bonny drummer?
The maidens' smiles make all the year
To him perpetual summer.
Eightpence per day,
Tho' all his pay,
It powders him for duty;
To love and you
He beats tattoo,
And quarters with his beauty."

The truth is, that the piece is wholly unworthy of Lamb's reputation, and is not deserving of the space which it would occupy in the present volume.

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## CHAPTER IV.

The *Dramatic Specimens*—Review of them in the *Quarterly*—*Elia* published—Lamb's letter to Southey—Alice W * * *—An attempt to solve the mystery—Lamb's self-sacrifice—A key to *Elia* endeavoured.

It was Southey's notion (and a very strange one it was), that it would be a good speculation for Longmans to publish a collection of the old English poets, and to give the editi[illegible] it to Lamb, whom, in a letter to Mrs. S[illegible]ay, 1804, he says that he had mentioned to [illegible] most competent person to manage such a [illegible]dded, Lamb and he might work together. [illegible], Longmans appear to have considered, on [illegible]hat Ellis's book sufficiently answered the [illegible] this direction; and nothing came of the [illegible]amb's own volume of *Specimens*, given [illegible] a few years later on, and the "Extracts [illegible] the Garrick Plays," contributed to Hone's *Table Book*.

I see that Southey touches upon the subject again in a letter to Coleridge, soon after the appearance of Lamb's book, where he observes: "Lamb's book I have heard of, and know not what it is. If coöperative labour were as practicable as it is desirable, what a history of English literature might he, and you, and I, set forth!"

It was upon a passage in one of the *Specimens*—Ford's *Broken Heart*—that Lamb happened to comment in a manner which proved obnoxious to the conductor of the *Quarterly Review*. Lamb's fault, in Gifford's eyes, was where he compares Calantha dancing after the arrival of

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the news of her lover's death, to the scene on Mount Calvary; and Gifford characterised the writer as "a poor maniac." Southey, who perceived at a glance how painfully the allusion would tell, addressed a remonstrance to Murray, with an expression of his deep regret that the passage should have appeared in print. It turned out that the article was from the pen of Gifford himself, and Southey's letter was handed over to the latter by Murray.

With all the feelings about Gifford and the *Quarterly Review* which I have inherited, and shall probably carry with me through life, I could not help being much and favourably impressed by the tone of that letter, in which the editor of the *Review* protests himself to Southey innocent of any malignant motive in alluding to Lamb as he had done. It appears that, till he had Southey's letter, he was altogether ignorant of Lamb's personal history, and of the terrible tragedy which had been enacted in the family. Gifford writes: "It has grieved and shocked me beyond expression. . . . I call God to witness, that in the whole course of my life I never heard one syllable of Mr. Lamb or his family. I knew not that he ever had a sister. . . . In a word, I declare to you, *in the most solemn manner*, that all I ever knew or ever heard of Mr. Lamb was merely his name. Had I been aware of one of the circumstances which you mention, I would have lost my right arm sooner than have written what I have. The plain truth is, that I was shocked at seeing him compare the sufferings and death of a person who just continues to dance after the death of her lover is announced (for this is all her merit), to the pangs of Mount Calvary. . . . I considered Lamb as a thoughtless scribbler, who, in circumstances of ease, amused himself by writing on any subject."

So far as the particular case is concerned, Gifford's

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THE

# WORKS

OF

# CHARLES LAMB.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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London:

PRINTED FOR C. AND J. OLLIER,

VERE-STREET, BOND-STREET.

1818.

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explanation may or may not be thought satisfactory: only, it is to be apprehended that Gifford and his staff sinned oftener "in ignorance of the circumstances" than was well, and still more frequently without that extenuation. At all events, it is a pity, perhaps, that Talfourd had not an opportunity of seeing Gifford's letter, as he might have made something of it. But even Barry Cornwall is silent here. He, at least, should have been aware how earnestly Gifford atoned in writing for his cruel home-thrust.

Southey thought highly of *Elia* when it appeared in a collected shape in 1823. In a letter to his friend Wynn, of January 25, 1823, he particularly says: "Read *Elia*, if the book has not fallen in your way. It is by my old friend Charles Lamb. There are some things in it which will offend, and some which will pain you, as they do me; but you will find in it a rich vein of pure gold."

This was high commendation—though, as in the case of *John Woodvil*, nearly a quarter of a century before, not unqualified. Southey doubtless referred, when he spoke of passages that would *offend*, and passages that would *pain*, to a certain levity of tone in dealing with sacred questions; and he did not confine this expression of opinion to his private correspondence. Curiously enough, the very fault which Southey found with Lamb in 1823, Lamb himself had found with Coleridge, as we know, in 1796.

The publication of the *Essays* was the immediate cause, in point of fact, of the first and only breach which ever occurred in that early and life-long friendship. It happened that, in the *Quarterly Review* for July, 1823, there was a paper "On the Progress of Infidelity," from Southey's pen, in which the *Essays of Elia* were described as wanting in a healthy religious tone. It

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seems that Southey himself entertained some misgivings as to the expression of which he had made use, and intended (as he subsequently avowed) to have altered the passage in proof; but he was not allowed the opportunity. The article, at the same time, went some way to compliment Lamb at the expense of his friends Hazlitt and Hunt. This, so far from palliating the offence in Lamb's view, only aggravated it; and, in the October number of the *London Magazine*, he publicly replied in a formal epistle to Robert Southey, Esq., signed *Elia.**

Southey was thunderstruck when the article was fairly before him. His first impression, on noticing "A Letter from Elia to Robert Southey, Esq.," in the list of contents, was, that "it was a letter of friendly pleasantry;" but when he became aware of its true scope and character, he instantly wrote off a letter to Lamb, in which he tried to explain the whole thing. That letter does not seem to have been kept.† But we have Lamb's in answer, where he speaks of the kindness of Southey's note "melting away the mist that was upon him."

Lamb's paper on Dawe the academician,‡ in the *Englishman's Magazine* for 1831, considering that he had been intimate with the man, and that the latter, however

* I suspect that Southey's taunt touched the very tender chord already jarred by Gifford in the *Quarterly*, where he inadvertently hinted at the insanity of Lamb. Southey's original phrase was, "*sane* religious tone."

† Southey kept *all* Lamb's letters. In a letter to Moxon, after Lamb's death, he says: "Lamb's letters shall be sent in the course of a fortnight or three weeks, when my son will be passing through town. They are not many, but I have never destroyed one."

‡ James Dawe, R.A., has been already incidentally mentioned. He became eventually court-painter at St. Petersburgh, and made a large fortune. The post had been previously offered to Mr. John Hazlitt, who declined it.

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contemptible, was no more, must appear rather harsh. It is infinitely severer than any thing which Hazlitt ever wrote about Haydon or about Northcote, both equally susceptible of satirical treatment; and it is strange to see how differently the world construed the same behaviour in different people. In a letter to Hazlitt, of November, 1805, too accessible and well known to admit of repetition or citation, there is much about Dawe in the same strain.*

It has been of late—and, since the appearance of Barry Cornwall's book, somewhat authoritatively—declared that the mystery respecting the young girl Alice W——, with whom Lamb was in love, will never be unravelled, and is irrecoverably buried. Not *quite* so, I should say. In a memorandum, partly in Lamb's hand, and furnishing for some correspondent a key to the names of persons mentioned in the first series of *Elia* by their initials, occurs—"Alice W——?" That is, the querist asks Lamb who she is, leaving a vacant space for the solution. Lamb replies: "Alice W—n, feigned (Winterton);" by which I apprehend that he meant to convey to the inquirer that Winterton was *not* the real name.

Now, a conjecture arises out of this that, if Winterton were not the real name, it was a name something similar to it. Lamb, in one or two passages of the *Essays* where she is alluded to, brings her in as "Alice W . . n," leaving us to guess that only two letters require to be supplied to arrive at what we want. My own conclusion is, that the name was *Winn*—Alice Winn.

* See *Final Memorials*, ii. 80, 83. Lamb contributed several odds and ends to the *Englishman's Magazine*; but perhaps his latest separate publication (not reckoning the collected *Elia* of 1833) was his poem called *Satan in Search of a Wife*, 1831, 12mo, with plates by Cruikshank (see *Final Memorials*, ii. 84). A specimen is given in *Eliana*, 1864, p. 410. It is not worthy of a permanent place among Lamb's works.

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Who Miss Winn was is equally doubtful. But she afterwards married Mr. Bartrum, the pawnbroker, of Princes Street, Coventry Street; and Lamb was seen by Hazlitt, subsequently to his Alice becoming Mrs. Bartrum, to wander up and down outside the shop, in the hope of catching a glimpse of the object of his passion. It may be worth adding, that one of Mrs. Bartrum's daughters afterwards married William Coulson, Esq., the eminent surgeon.

There are several references in *Elia* to this painful and delicate subject. In his essay on "Dream-Children," in the first series, collected in 1823, he feigns a father relating to his little ones the history of the family; and he proceeds as follows:

"Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness and difficulty and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: 'We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father.'"

Again, in another place, where he is speaking of his musical tastes, we have the subjoined bit of autobiography, in which a second (and *much earlier*) flame is mentioned, in the same dip of ink with Alice W—n:

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"When, therefore, I say that I have no ear, you will understand me to mean—*for music.*—To say that this heart never melted at the concourse of sweet sounds, would be a foul self-libel. *Water parted from the Sea* never fails to move it strangely. So does *In Infancy.* But they were used to be sung at her harpsichord (the old-fashioned instrument in vogue in those days) by a gentlewoman—the gentlest, sure, that ever merited the appellation—the sweetest—why should I hesitate to name Mrs. S——, once the blooming Fanny Weatheral of the Temple—who had power to thrill the soul of Elia, small imp as he was, even in his long coats; and to make him glow, tremble, and blush, with a passion that not faintly indicated the day-spring of that absorbing sentiment which was afterwards destined to overwhelm and subdue his nature quite for Alice W—n."

But Lamb's life was to be devoted to a different and to a higher purpose. He was to become a sacrificer at the altar of Love; but his was a loftier and purer godhead than that pagan Cupid who links the hearts of men and women so fast together. His was another sort of marriage; contracted by him in early youth, it was the only union he ever knew: and no hymeneal rites could have been more religiously observed than the bond which knit together the son and daughter of John Lamb.

"I am wedded, Coleridge," he wrote in 1796, "to the fortunes of my sister and my poor old father. Oh, my friend! I think sometimes, could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose? not those 'merrier days'—not the 'pleasant days of hope'—not 'those wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid,' which I have so often and so feelingly regretted—but the days, Coleridge, of a *mother's* fondness for her *schoolboy.*" We know very well that this outburst of filial love was



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a good deal more than a figure of speech. In the blank verse which he wrote, with the horrible episode of September 23, 1796, vividly fresh in his mind, how tenderly he apostrophises his dead parent! how he would recall, if he could, what has passed! and how he upbraids himself (too severely, it may be) for his boyish waywardnesses!

He once opened his mind to Coleridge, however, to the extent of confessing a half-belief that his self-devotion, if it had been in some respects advantageous, was not unattended, on the other hand, by certain drawbacks. "'Twas a weakness," this is what he says to him, "concerning which I may say, in the words of Petrarch (whose life is now open before me), 'if it drew me out of some vices, it also prevented the growth of many virtues.'"

It has been already mentioned, in connection with the A. W. mystery, that a copy of the first edition of *Elia*, published in 1823, is in existence, containing on a spare leaf a partial key to the persons mentioned in some of the essays under fictitious names, or by initials only. The catalogue of enigmas was, in fact, sent to Lamb by some correspondent; and Lamb, in a vacant column opposite, furnished the solutions. The document is undoubtedly authentic, and a further examination of its contents may not be undesirable or uninteresting. It is therefore reproduced *verbatim* herewith:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| M. . . . . | Pa. 13 . . | Maynard, hang'd himself. |
| G. D. . . . . | „ 21 . . | George Dyer, Poet. |
| H. . . . . | „ 32 . . | Hodges. |
| W. . . . . | „ 45 . . | |
| Dr. T—e . . | „ 46 . . | Dr. Trollope. |
| Th. . . . . | „ 47 . . | Thornton. |
| S. . . . . | „ „ . . | Scott, died in Bedlam. |
| M. . . . . | „ „ . . | Maunde, dismissed school. |
| C. V. Le G. . | „ 48 . . | Chs. Valentine Le Grice. |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| F. . . . . | Pa. 49 . . | Favell; left Cambr^s because he was ashamed of his father, who was a house-painter there. |
| Fr. . . . . | „ 50 . . | Franklin, Gram^r Mast., Hertford. |
| T. . . . . | „ „ . . | Marmaduke Thompson. |
| K. . . . . | „ 59 . . | Kenney, Dramatist, author of *Raising Wind*, &c. |
| S. T. C. . . . | „ 60 . . | Samuel Taylor Coleridge. |
| Alice W—n . | „ 63 . . | Feigned (Winterton). |
| *** . . . . | „ 64 | No meaning. |
| **** . . . . | „ „ | |
| *** . . . . | „ „ | |
| Mrs. S. . . . | „ 87 . . | Mrs. Spinkes. |
| R. . . . . | „ 98 . . | Ramsay, London Library, Ludg. St.; now extinct. |
| Granville S. . | „ „ . . | Granville Sharp. |
| E. B. . . . . | „ 130 . . | Edward Burney, half-brother of Miss Burney. |
| B. . . . . | „ 141 . . | Braham, now a Xtian. |
| *** *** **** . | „ 170 . . | Distrest Sailors. |
| J. M. . . . . | „ 195 . . | Jekyll. |
| Susan P.. . . | „ 198 . . | Susan Peirson. |
| R. N. . . . . | „ 206 . . | Randal Norris, Subtreas^r Inner Temple. |
| C. . . . . | „ 216 . . | Coleridge. |
| F. . . . . | „ 222 . . | Field. |
| B. F. . . . . | „ 238 . . | Barron Field, brother of Frank. |
| Lord C. . . . | „ 243 . . | Lord Camelford. |
| Sally W—r. . | „ 248 . . | Sally Winter. |
| J. W. . . . | „ „ . . | Jas. White, author of *Falstaff's Letters*. |
| St. L. . . . | „ 263 | No meaning. |
| B., Rector of— | „ „ | |

The T. H. of "Witches and other Night-Fears" is, I think, well known to be Thornton Hunt, eldest son of the late author of *Rimini*. J. E., in "My Relations," is, it is barely necessary to explain, James Elia, *alias* John Lamb, the writer's brother. B. F., in the essay headed "Mackery End in Hertfordshire," represents the initials of Barron Field. J. W., in the epistle to Field, stands for James, or popularly Jem, White, great patron of young chimney-sweeps, and author of the *Falstaff's Letters*. Joseph D., who sent Lamb his guinea epic of *Alfred*,

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"twenty-four books to read in the dog-days," was Joseph Cottle, a name ever to be mentioned with honour, whatever estimate may be formed of his poetical abilities by later generations. Sir A. C., in "Ellistoniana" (*Elia*, 1833, p. 40), is Sir Astley Cooper, the noted surgeon. Lovel, it is well known, was intended by Lamb for his own father; and it is curious that he should have chosen the particular name, as the only persons bearing it known to Lamb were, I apprehend, the Lovell who stood in the pillory for libelling the "first gentleman in Europe;" and the young Quaker, who was to have been one of the party of emigration, at the time when Coleridge and some of his friends planned that mad scheme for settling in America.

In the "Two Races of Men," Ralph Bigod is John Fenwick; and Comberbatch is Coleridge, who enlisted as *Silas Thompson Comberbatch* in 1791. I scarcely know whether he or Lamb was aware that the Comberbatches were an eminent family—an octavo volume was devoted to their history so lately as 1866—or whether the selection was a pure matter of chance. B., of the "Imperfect Sympathies," is, as we see above, Braham, the singer. Mrs. M., of "Oxford in the Vacation," is, of course, Mrs. Montagu, wife of Mr. Basil Montagu. M., of "The Old and New Schoolmaster," and of the "Dissertation on Roast Pig," is Manning, the mathematical tutor at Cambridge, between whom and Lamb there is extant a considerable body of correspondence.

In the Elian Essay entitled "The Wedding," Admiral —— must be interpreted, Admiral Burney. Lamb speaks of the Rector of St. Mildred's, in the Poultry, having rebuked him by a significant glance for his levity of conduct at the ceremonial described. It is curious enough that, in a letter to Southey, he lets us into the fact that, at his friend Hazlitt's wedding, at St.

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Andrew's, Holborn, in 1808, he was nearly turned out on the same account.*

* In "A Character of the late Elia"—of course, written by Lamb himself (*Lond. Mag.*, 1823; *Elia*, 1833, Pref., or *Eliana*, 1864, p. 181 *et seq.*)—there is a solution of this in what may be described, perhaps, as Lamb's irrepressible and semi-morbid exuberance of temperament under certain conditions. The passage runs as follows: "The truth is, he [Elia] gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost." In a letter to Patmore, written in 1827, he tells his correspondent that he has been to a funeral, "where I made a pun, to the consternation of the rest of the mourners."

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## CHAPTER V.

Lamb's reading—"Imperfect Sympathies"—His duties at the India House beneficial to his health—An anecdote—Question put to Coleridge about Cowley—Lamb's opinions about books—Lamb and Hazlitt.

I DO not know whether an apology will be considered necessary for introducing, from Lamb's own writings, so many illustrations of his feelings and opinions. I come now, in my somewhat unsystematic course, to speak, or let him speak where I can, of his literary tastes and loves. These he has stated with tolerable fulness in various parts of the *Essays;* but he has not, to my knowledge, devoted any paper especially to the subject. It may, therefore, be serviceable to gather up these scattered allusions into a form which admits of their being read together.

"From my childhood," says he, "I was extremely inquisitive about witches and witch-stories. My maid, and more legendary aunt, supplied me with good store. But I shall mention the accident which directed my curiosity originally into this channel. In my father's book-closet, the *History of the Bible*, by Stackhouse, occupied a distinguished station. The pictures with which it abounds—one of the ark, in particular, and another of Solomon's temple, delineated with all the fidelity of ocular admeasurement, as if the artist had been upon the spot—attracted my childish attention. There was a picture, too, of the Witch raising up Samuel, which I wish that I had never seen. We shall come to that hereafter. Stackhouse is in two huge tomes —and there was a pleasure in removing folios of that

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magnitude, which, with infinite straining, was as much as I could manage, from the situation which they occupied upon an upper shelf. I have not met with the work from that time to this; but I remember it consisted of Old-Testament stories, orderly set down, with the *objection* appended to each story, and the *solution* of the objection regularly tacked to that. The *objection* was a summary of whatever difficulties had been opposed to the credibility of the history, by the shrewdness of ancient or modern infidelity, drawn up with an almost complimentary excess of candour. The *solution* was brief, modest, and satisfactory. The bane and antidote were both before you. To doubts so put, and so quashed, there seemed to be an end for ever."

In the "Old and New Schoolmaster," he starts with what may be accepted as a kind of literary Confession of Faith:

"My reading has been lamentably desultory and immethodical. Odd, out-of-the-way old English plays and treatises, have supplied me with most of my notions, and ways of feeling. In every thing that relates to *science*, I am a whole Encyclopædia behind the rest of the world. I should have scarcely cut a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in king John's days. I know less geography than a school-boy of six weeks' standing. To me, a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabout Africa merges into Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. Yet do I hold a correspondence with a very dear friend in the first-named of these two Terræ Incognitæ. I have no astronomy. I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess

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at Venus only by her brightness—and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation. Of history and chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats as *first* in my fancy. I make the wildest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd-kings. My friend M[anning], with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second. I am entirely unacquainted with the modern languages; and, like a better man than myself, have 'small Latin and less Greek.' I am a stranger to the shapes and texture of the commonest trees, herbs, flowers—not from the circumstance of my being town-born, for I should have brought the same inobservant spirit into the world with me, had I first seen it 'on Devon's leafy shores'—and am no less at a loss among purely town objects, tools, engines, mechanic processes.—Not that I affect ignorance—but my head has not many mansions, nor spacious; and I have been obliged to fill it with such cabinet curiosities as it can hold without aching. I sometimes wonder how I have passed my probation with so little discredit in the world as I have done, upon so meagre a stock. But, the fact is, a man may do very well with a very little knowledge, and scarce be found out, in mixed company; every body is so much more ready to produce his own, than to call for a display of your acquisitions. But in a *tête-à-tête* there is no shuffling.

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"I would not be domesticated all my days with a person of very superior capacity to my own—not, if I know myself at all, from any considerations of jealousy or self-comparison, for the occasional communion with such minds has constituted the fortune and felicity of my life—but the habit of too constant intercourse with spirits above you, instead of raising you, keeps you down. Too frequent doses of original thinking from others, restrain what lesser portion of that faculty you may possess of your own. You get entangled in another man's mind,* even as you lose yourself in another man's grounds. You are walking with a tall varlet, whose strides out-pace yours to lassitude."

Lamb complained, with no little truth, of the feeling of reading a book *raw*, when it was in MS.; but certainly one of the finest and subtlest pieces of criticism he ever delivered was that where, referring to Milton's *Lycidas*, he speaks of his disappointment and shock at finding it disfigured by corrections. We think the more highly of him for pointing out the blemish, and perhaps a little more unfavourably of ourselves for not having stumbled before upon what is so strikingly and so obviously just. He thought of such a poem as flowing from the author's brain unsullied by revision; and when the original draft of it was shown to him in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, he was disconcerted at finding interlineations and erasures and blotted lines. The illusion was destroyed in a moment. Milton's production was no longer a semi-divine emanation of genius in his eyes, for Milton was a sharer in the common weakness of authors—*Lycidas* was "copy."

He "sinned in almost adoring" Priestley, as he told Coleridge in one letter. Priestley had equally, perhaps, among his admirers, Coleridge himself and Hazlitt.

* Compare *Elia*, 1833, p. 44: "I love to lose myself in other men's minds."—*Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.*

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Some of the questions which he puts to Coleridge at an early stage of their friendship are odd enough. He says in one letter:

"I have just been reading a book, which I may be too partial to, as it was the delight of my childhood; but I will recommend it to you—it is Izaak Walton's *Complete Angler.*"

Coleridge made no reply to this; so, soon afterwards, it came to him again on the back of another query:

"Have you met with a new poem, called *The Pursuits of Literature* [by Matthias]? From the extracts in the *British Review*, I judge it to be a very humorous thing. . . . Among all your quaint readings, did you ever light upon Walton's *Complete Angler?* I asked you the question once before."

Whether he received proper satisfaction even this time we can never tell; for Coleridge's letters to Lamb have (it seems, unexceptionally) perished. It is by no means impossible that Coleridge had not, at that time, lighted upon the book which had been the delight of his friend's childhood; for Coleridge, it should be recollected, comes before us here, not as the philosopher, before whom human learning, in well-nigh all its branches, lay spread out, and at whose feet disciples kneeled to listen as to an oracle,—but as a young man, whose wide and ambitious course of studies was still very short of completion, and who would probably have allowed freely that he had more to learn than to teach. On this account, these comparisons of notes, these queries put—and, no doubt (if the truth could be arrived at), answered to the best of the answerer's knowledge—acquire an additional interest and worth. We have in these letters a clue to an epoch in Coleridge's life which stands by itself. He returned from Germany full of new projects, new ideas, enlarged conceptions.

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Lamb, in reading Johnson's *Life of Waller*, had met with an account of Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso's *Godfrey of Boulogne*, which only whetted his appetite, and made him long to get the book. He says to Coleridge:

"Fairfax I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson, in his *Life of Waller*, gives a most delicious specimen (?) of him."*

Shortly after this, what was his delight at stumbling on a copy of the book itself, for a trifle! It was a day worthy of being marked with a white cross, when he secured the long-looked-for-come-at-last treasure:

"By the way, I have lit upon Fairfax's *Godfrey of Bullen* for half-a-crown.† Rejoice with me."

He could not obtain Burns's *Works*. An odd volume of Currie's edition was all that he could make himself master of in those early days. He wants, of course, to hear if Coleridge has been more fortunate:

"Have you seen the new edition of Burns—his posthumous Works and Letters? I have only been able to procure the first volume, which contains the Life."

It ought not to be surprising that it should have come home to Lamb very often, and sometimes rather

* There is no *specimen* of Fairfax in Johnson's Memoir. As for Cowley, he was, probably, one of Lamb's earliest loves; for, in his essay on "Blakesmoor in H[ertford]shire," in *Elia*, 1833, he says, in describing his impressions at the sight of the ruins of Gilston: "Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, . . . I should have cried out to them to spare a plank, at least, out of the cheerful store-room, in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley." There is a print of Cowley himself seated in a window of the old-fashioned sort, and reading Spenser; here is a companion to it. He recurs to Cowley in "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading" (*Elia*, 1833, p. 50): "The sweetest names, and which carry a perfume in the mention, are Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley."

† It was the common edition of 1687, 8vo.

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too forcibly to be well borne, how utterly unsuited the position he held at the India House was to a person of his temperament; and he must have keenly felt the dreariness of his lot, and the "imperfect sympathies" which surrounded him, in some of his hypochondriacal moods, at a time of his life when friends were scant, and the best of all, perhaps, was away—*across the fields.*

It was surely in Leadenhall Street that the paper on "Imperfect Sympathies" was sketched out, or first thought of, if not composed altogether. The genius of the place would have been a fit deity to invoke and adjure. In one of his epistles to Coleridge from "Desk," he pours into the ear of his friend a complaint of the hardness of his destiny:

"Not a soul loves Bowles here [at the India House]; scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament: they talk a language I understand not; I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter, and with the dead in their books."

But, notwithstanding the peevish strain in which Lamb writes here and elsewhere of his bondage among the Egyptians, there is sufficient ground for the (I know, unusual) opinion that the East-India House, so far from being injurious to him, operated most salutarily on his moral and bodily health. There is no doubt that the daily task-work, which he underwent with such reluctance, and from which he escaped with such ecstasy, was of the highest service to a man intellectually organised as he was. It is also next to a certainty that if Lamb had remained at his post, with more or less nominal duties, the continuance of regular employment, however light, would have proved beneficial. After more than a quarter of a century's monotonous occupation, he "went home for ever," as he expresses it, in 1825, when he

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was just fifty years old. And what followed this liberation, to which he had looked forward so long, and from which he had hoped so much? In a few months, his freedom was nearly as irksome to him as his former drudgery had been! I am persuaded that that release from the India House shortened, instead of prolonging, his valuable life.*

I have been straying away from the immediate subject, but I must add something more. Towards the last, Lamb appears to have enjoyed, in consideration of the length of his service, certain privileges, of which, according to a tradition I am about to notice, he did not neglect to avail himself. A story, for the truth of which I must decline to be responsible, runs to the effect that on one occasion the head of the office complained to Lamb of the rather excessive irregularity of his attendance. "Really, Mr. Lamb, you come very late!" observed the official. "Y-yes," replied Mr. Lamb, with his habitual stammer, "b-but consi-sider how ear-early I go!"

To return now, for a moment, to Lamb's early reading, and to the small items of literary news and chat with which he sprinkles his letters, prior to 1800, to Coleridge. It is strange to hear him avowing complete ignorance of Jeremy Taylor's writings; much more so, *to us*, than to learn that he has not read *Nature and Art*. He says:

"I will get *Nature and Art* [by Mrs. Inchbald]—have not seen it yet—*nor any of Jeremy Taylor's Works.*"

It is a powerful illustration of the difference between

* "For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement."—*The Superannuated Man* (*Elia*, 1833, p. 97).

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lasting and transitory fame, that Taylor's works rank even higher now than they did then; while Mrs. Inchbald's book, once in every body's hands—even such a man as Coleridge asks such a man as Lamb if he has read it—requires a note to explain to nine readers out of ten whether it was a novel or a magazine!

Far more in harmony with Lamb's well-known partiality for some of our fine old English classics, is an inquiry he directs to the same quarter respecting Cowley; for whose prose writings, however, Lamb by no means stands alone in his relish. One is apt to have, somehow, a tenderness for the memory of Cowley, without precisely knowing why; and an interest in his personal history, which many greater authors fail to inspire.

Lamb writes to Coleridge:

"In all our comparisons of taste, I do not know whether I have ever heard your opinion of a poet very dear to me—the now-out-of-fashion Cowley. Favour me with your judgment of him; and tell me if his prose essays in particular, as well as no inconsiderable part of his verse, be not delicious."

In one of the early epistles to Coleridge, Lamb observes: "You have a Milton; but it is pleasanter to eat one's own peas out of one's own garden, than to buy them by the peck at Covent Garden: and a book reads the better which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots and dog's-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins, or over a pipe—which is the maximum."

Then, a little further on, when the Milton, &c. were sent, he writes: "If you find the Milton in certain parts dirtied and soiled with a crumb of right Gloucester blacked in the candle (my usual supper), or, perad-

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venture, a stray ash of tobacco wafted into the crevices,—look to that passage more especially: depend upon it, it contains good matter."

One cannot blame the late Mr. George Daniel, after this, for not bringing out his unique black-letters and morocco bindings on "Charles-Lamb" evenings. Lamb came to see him occasionally (*very* occasionally, I should think) at Canonbury Square, and Mr. Daniel always kept one particular book of old songs and ballads for his illustrious, but wet-fingered and dog's-earing, visitor: for D. was a bibliomaniac, and had uniques without number, and copies in old morocco; and to have let Elia "paw" any of these would have destroyed D.'s peace of mind for the rest of his days. Daniel related to me other traits of his friend; but I do not care to repeat these anecdotes, for I have been admonished that they are not in all cases historical.*

The extension of Lamb's acquaintance had the effect of occasionally leading him to turn his thoughts to profounder and subtler matters than poetry, divinity, or fiction of the Inchbald school. His introduction to Hazlitt, for example, somewhere about 1802, brought him into contact with a subject to which the latter had devoted his attention for several years—the real springs of human action. In 1804, Hazlitt was in London, endeavouring to arrange the publication of an essay on this abstruse theme; a labour of love, in which he had spent years of thought and anxious study. It

* As may be supposed, a variety of stories are current respecting Lamb, independently of those which occur in the biographies of him. But to some of these no credit is due; while others, even granting them to be matters of fact, are not worth paper and print. Indeed, one or two, which were placed at my service for the present purpose, I declined to insert—because, in the first place, I did not believe them; and, secondly, because they seemed to me to add nothing to Lamb's reputation, whether true or false.

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was partly owing to Lamb that the book was printed, in the year following, by Mr. Johnson, of St. Paul's Churchyard.

It is not a very extravagant hypothesis, under the circumstances, that conversations passed between Lamb and his new acquaintance touching the subject of the book, both at the time it was on its way to the public, and afterwards. At all events, on a scrap of soiled foolscap before me, there is, in Hazlitt's handwriting, a fragment of a dialogue (real or feigned) between Lamb and himself, on the question whether people take an interest in good for its own sake. But there are words I cannot decipher; it is a mere hasty scrawl in my grandfather's worst hand, made, no doubt, with a view to subsequent elaboration. I have a second similar sheet of paper, on one side of which Hazlitt has written, fortunately in a much more legible manner, something which appears to have passed, in his hearing, between Charles and John Lamb:

"*J. L.* This is the strangest tale that e'er I heard.

"*C. L.* It is the strangest fellow, brother John."

In the absence of context, it is impossible to divine what this means—to make head or tail of it, as the phrase is. It has been already hinted that Lamb's fellow-clerks were not the only Imperfect Sympathies with whom he had to contend: he had one much nearer home—brother John, to wit.

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## CHAPTER VI.

**The Lambs from home—Lamb's jokes misquoted—Anecdote of *John Woodvil*—Some other anecdotes of Lamb—Errors of his biographers pointed out—His settlement at Colebrook Cottage—Mr. George Daniel's account of him—Conflicting testimony as to Lamb's treatment at Enfield.**

THERE is one phase of the life of the two Lambs which ought, perhaps, to have received a somewhat larger share of prominence. Of their stay-at-home existence, or, as Miss Lamb herself calls it somewhere, "our what-we-do" life, there has been enough said, if not more than enough; but a year rarely passed without a trip to one of the Universities, or to a friend in the country, or—last resource—to the sea-side. His visit to Oxford, in 1809, he has described at some length in "Oxford in the Vacation:" the Hazlitts, or, at least, Hazlitt himself, accompanied the Lambs on this occasion; and Elia has also commemorated the event. But visits to the sister-University were more common, for there Elia had friends.

Lamb, recalling this visit to Oxford, which seems to have made a strong impression on his mind, when "in the quadrangles he walked gowned,"* says: "These were bright visitations in a scholar's and a clerk's life; 'far off their coming shone;'—I was as good as an almanac in those days."

But if the holiday was not spent at Oxford or Cambridge, he was fond of selecting some quiet retreat in the country—he instances Henley-on-Thames as a favourite spot in one of the Elian Essays. His trips

* *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, 1867, i. 173.



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to the sea were very occasional; and Lamb himself, at last, seems to have found these excursions terribly irksome. In the "Old Margate Hoy," he says: "We have been dull at Worthing one summer, duller at Brighton another, dullest at Eastbourne a third; and are at this moment doing dreary penance at—Hastings! And all because we were happy many years ago for one brief week at—Margate! This was our first sea-side experiment. . . . *We had neither of us seen the sea.*" This is a curious point: for how are we to reconcile the passage, referring almost certainly to an incident not of later occurrence than 1815, with Lamb's Sonnet, published with Coleridge's Poems in 1796, and headed, "Written at Midnight, *by the Sea-side, after a Voyage*,"—unless this was, to use his own phrase, a mere "creature of the fancy"?*

Once we find him visiting Lloyd at Birmingham —nay, staying there a whole fortnight. He has not transmitted his impressions of the Black Country; his biographers have kept his very visit to it a secret, down to the present time, as if they had been afraid of an explanation being asked for, which was not forthcoming. The journey was undertaken before Mr. Procter knew the Lambs. As for Talfourd, probably he had never heard of the circumstance, or it did not conveniently fall into his plan—which consisted in reducing a certain number of Lamb's letters to a supposed conventional standard, and enclosing them in an elegant letterpress framework of his own. Lamb's trip to Birmingham in early life is a puzzle only because we cannot get at the circumstances.† In the bare fact there was nothing

* He was at Margate again in 1831: see letter to Mr. Taylor (Taylor and Hessey), of July 8 in that year.

† He visited Birmingham again, later on—about 1820. See his letter to Messrs. Ollier, *infrà*.

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particularly strange: much more singular and inexplicable, to my apprehension, was the jaunt of Charles and his sister to France, at a later date, when there was no Charles Lloyd at the journey's end, but a people speaking a language of which the two Lambs understood scarcely two sentences.

Mr. Patmore has preserved some record of this strange pilgrimage in a letter from Lamb to him, in which the writer says that he had tasted frog. As might have been anticipated, the excitement and sudden change of scene proved too much for Miss Lamb. In a letter to Leigh Hunt, of August 18, 1823, Mrs. Shelley says:

"Two years ago, the Lambs made an excursion to France. When at Amiens, poor Miss L. was taken ill in her usual way; and Lamb was in despair. He met, however, with some acquaintances, who got Miss Lamb into proper hands; and L. went on to Versailles, and stayed with the Kenn[e]ys."

Here Mrs. Shelley refers the incident to 1821: that is not the usual opinion; I believe that it does not represent what was the fact. But it seems to be one of those events in the not very well *dated* life of the Lambs, about which we have no good pretence for being too confident.

I should not be inclined, certainly, to place that first experiment of the kind—the visit to Margate, when they both saw the sea *for the first time*—very early: perhaps it took place about 1818. But if the Lambs did not venture at the outset far from home, on economical grounds, or from taste, they used to make little excursions together on Charles's holidays, and take their dinner with them in a basket. "Do you remember," he says to his sister, in the essay on "Old China," "our pleasant walks to Enfield, Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we

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had a holiday; . . . and the little hand-basket, in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad; and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house where we might go in and produce our store, only paying for the ale that you must call for; and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth? . . . And sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us."

Lamb's biographers have made somewhat odd work with his "sayings." Some have been recorded which were not worth the process. Others have been quoted as his which are not his. In a few cases, a feeling of perplexity arises in consequence of various readings—a not unfrequent contingency, of course, with jokes and sallies. One gentleman informs us that Lamb, in answer to some good thing he had said, stammered out: "Ben Jonson said worse things—and better!" But then another gentleman, who professes to be learned in Eliana, says that it was not Ben Jonson, but *Dr. Johnson!*—so that, after all, one scarcely knows.

The following seems to be an indication that the text of Lamb's jests is not perfectly settled yet:

*Mr. Procter.*

"An old lady, fond of her Dissenting minister, wearied Lamb by the length of her praises. 'I speak because I *know* him well,' said she. 'Well, I don't,' replied Lamb, 'I don't; but d—n him at a venture!'"

*Mr. Fitzgerald.*

"A lady once bored him a good deal. 'Such a charming man! I know him! Bless him! I know him!' To her, Charles, wearied with repetition of this encomium—'Well, I don't; but *d—n him at a hazard.*'"

It is a pity to see twaddling commonplaces put forward as specimens of the powers of a man who was really and truly a wit, notwithstanding all that his biographers have accomplished towards a suggestion of the contrary.

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There is that delightful touch about Coleridge, when, to Leigh Hunt—who had expressed his astonishment to Lamb at C.'s volubility on certain religious questions—Lamb answered: "N-never mind what C-Coleridge says—h-he's so full of his f-fun!" This is given by Barry Cornwall, who speaks of Lamb *tranquillising* Hunt with "Ne-ne-never mind what Coleridge says—he's full of fun."

There is an anecdote, odd enough in its way, connected with the passage in *John Woodvil:*

> "To see the sun to bed, and to arise
> Like some hot amorist with glowing eyes," &c.

Hazlitt quoted these lines in one of his *Table Talks;* and there they met Godwin's eye. The latter, says Hazlitt, "was so struck with the beauty of the passage, and with a consciousness of having seen it before, that he was uneasy till he could recollect where; and, after hunting in vain for it in Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and other not unlikely places, sent to Mr. Lamb to know if he could help him to the author!"

Miss Lamb and Mrs. Hazlitt hit upon a plan one day for doing George Dyer, as they considered, a good turn. They went to Clifford's Inn, where his chambers were, during his absence, and sewed up his ragged arm-chair, as a pleasant surprise for him upon his return home. Conceive George's horror! That arm-chair, before its unlucky renovation, had been the grand receptacle of the Dyer library; its inmost recesses were to this Archimedes, in a word, a bookcase!

Dyer published *two* quartos on Poetry; and when the preface had been worked off, the author discovered that he had perpetrated some prodigious blunder in it, so that the whole had to be lifted bodily out, and printed

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again. Lamb hereupon christened Dyer *Cancellarius Magnus*, as Southey mentions in a letter to Grosvenor Bedford, of March 22, 1807.

Hazlitt took his son to Lamb's one day, and expected to be asked to dinner. Lamb said he was sorry, but he had nothing in the house but cold kid to offer them. "Cold kid!" Hazlitt cried; and Lamb stuck to it that that was all. Hazlitt went away at last in a rage, leaving his son behind, and adjourned to the Reynells', where he dined off cold lamb. His son joined him while the meal was about, and observed that he thought Lamb's roast beef better than this. "Roast *beef!* he told me he had only cold kid!" "Oh, that was his fun!" But Hazlitt thought it was past a joke.

I do not remember to have seen Lamb's pun about Hazlitt's *New English Grammar* quoted as such. It occurs in a letter to Manning. "Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin; Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language: but the *gray mare* is the better horse." The italics are the writer's.

Lamb has paid a tolerably heavy penalty for having been a wit. Unlike Sheridan, who has had not only his own good things secured to him, but the good things of many other people into the bargain, Lamb has suffered doubly: first, from the misquotation of many of the witticisms which he really uttered; and, secondly, from the quotation of what he probably never intended for witticisms at all. Take, for example, the anecdote reported about Enfield. He once said, we are told, that Enfield was a very *stylish* place—because the fields about it abounded in stiles! This is not wit or humour: it is certainly not Lamb's wit or humour. At this rate, a score or two of ineptitudes might be collected, doubtless, by patient inquiry, and the catalogue of *Lamb-*

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*puniana** might be considerably swollen. But *cui bono?*

I know of a blacksmith at Edmonton, who survives in very few minds at the present time; but whose society, if the report which has come to me be correct, the author of *Elia* affected more or less while he was a resident at Enfield. This village Mulciber, as I have understood, emptied more than one tankard at the expense of Charles Lamb, Esq.; and made his conversation as acceptable at times to his visitor, as that of more distinguished acquaintances: which may be a double reason why the little circumstance is overlooked in the biographies. Mr. Hone† and the blacksmith rowed nearly in the same boat: they were both ungenteel topics, and somewhat ugly customers.

We have heard enough on all sides of poor *Mr. H.*—his origin, his fate, and every thing else about him. In the *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, 1867, there are a few new particulars, which need not be repeated; but I did not mention there, and may therefore add now, that I have been told, on pretty good authority, that one cause of the failure was the disappointment of the audience at the tameness of the plot. *Hogsflesh* was not so startling an upshot as they had looked for.

The story of Lamb and Martin Burney's dirty hands is too well known to need repetition here. I believe that the *jeu d'esprit* was not Lamb's at all, but was made by a gentleman who never uttered a second witticism in the whole course of his life, and who thought it *a little* hard to be robbed of this unique achievement! The real

* "Of a man too prodigal of lampoons and verbal jokes, Lamb said threateningly, 'I'll Lamb-pun him.'"—Barry Cornwall's *Memoir*, p. 198.

† William Hone, the entertaining author of the *Every-Day Book*, *Table Book*, and *Year Book*; and a steadfast political champion on the (then) losing side.

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person, I have understood, was the father of the present Mr. Commissioner Ayrton.

Mr. Fitzgerald* has fallen into an odd mistake where, in his book on Lamb, he speaks of the latter having in his library "a curiously annotated book, specimens of which he afterwards copied out, and sent to the *London*," with a little note. "This book," pursues Mr. Fitzgerald, "was Scott's *Critical Essays on some of the Poems of several English Poets:* a handsome octavo, bought at the sale of Ritson's books, and *enriched* (or deformed, as some would think it) with MS. annotation." Nobody ever heard of such a book, for the excellent reason that it never existed. This was merely one of Lamb's hoaxes, like the Fragments of Burton and the Life of Munden.†

I may also be allowed to suggest that "that K—— who, with his wife—'that part French, better part Englishman'—carried off Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle," was not Kemble the actor, but Kenney the dramatist.‡

* *Charles Lamb: his Friends, his Haunts, and his Books.* By Percy Fitzgerald, M.A., F.S.A. 1866.

† The same is to be said of the letter to Manning; to whom Lamb wrote, during his absence in China, to say that Alsager (the commercial editor of the *Times*) had made his *début* as an actor at one of the London houses. In a letter to Patmore, of 1827, he tells him that "Procter has got a wen growing out at the nape of his neck. . . . Hone has hanged himself for debt. Godwin was taken up for picking pockets," &c.—all pure inventions, of course. Mr. Fitzgerald seems also to have been unaware that the motto printed by Coleridge on the small volume containing his own poems, with some by Lamb and Lloyd (*Duplex nobis vinculum, &c.*), was Coleridge's own composition, and not quoted from another writer. At p. 72 of his volume, Mr. Fitzgerald has printed two letters from Coleridge to Lamb; but the text is inaccurate. As for Mr. Procter's mistakes, I prefer to say no more.

‡ The late Mrs. Kenney was a Mdlle. Mercier, in fact; there is a droll tripartite letter still in the possession of one of her daughters, in

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Colebrooke Cottage.

Southey's Cottage.

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Lamb may not have been a very careful corrector of the press; but it is to be recollected, that in his time—strange as it may seem—even well-educated persons were guilty of the most serious slips in orthography, owing to the simple fact, I presume, that the point was not thought to be of any importance. So it is that Miss Lamb's correspondence is thickly sown with blunders of this sort, of which many school-girls would now be ashamed; and in the spelling of proper names both Lamb and his sister occasionally committed strange mistakes. In one letter to Hazlitt, he addresses his correspondent as *Hazzlit.* Sheridan Knowles is *Noules* (this was Miss Lamb writing to a friend); and Holcroft stands *Ouldcroft:* but here, it seems, the misspelling was intentional. He invariably calls his grammar-master at Christ's Hospital, in his Recollections of that place "Thirty-five Years ago," *Field,* whereas it should be *Fielde:* and this error runs through all the editions of *Elia.**

After several changes of residence in the metropolis, Lamb made his earliest experiment in the ruralising way in 1823, when, as a temporary arrangement, he removed, with his sister, to Colebrook Cottage, Islington, near the New River.† The late Mr. Daniel, in describing Lamb's migration at this period‡ from the smoke and

which Lamb, Miss Lamb, and Miss Kelly the actress, take up the pen by turn. It was written to Kenney: and there are others also addressed to the same person, I believe, in the hands of a lady who is a Holcroft by birth.

* The Rev. Matthew Fielde, M.A., who taught Lamb Latin, was considered an excellent scholar in his time, and obtained the Chancellor's gold medal at University College, Cambridge; as I am informed by his grandson, still living.

† Properly Colnbrook Row, from Coln-brook, or the Coln-river. I observe that some of Lamb's friends called it properly *Colnbrook;* as mentioned above, Lamb himself was singularly negligent and variable in orthographical points.

‡ *Love's Last Labour not Lost,* 1863.

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bustle of London to what, half a century ago, was a pleasant suburban retreat, says: "He took much interest in the antiquities of 'Merrie Islington;' 'Queen Elizabeth's Walk' became his favourite promenade in summer time, for its historical associations, its seclusion, and its shade. He would watch the setting sun from the top of old Canonbury Tower, and sit silently contemplating the 'spangled heavens' (for he was a disciple of Plato, the great apostle of the beautiful) until the cold night air warned him to retire. He was intimate with Goodman Symes, the then tenant of this venerable tower, and a brother antiquary in a small way; who took pleasure in entertaining him in the antique panelled chamber where Goldsmith wrote his *Traveller*, and supped frugally on buttermilk; and in pointing to a small portrait of Shakespeare, in a curiously carved gilt frame, which Lamb would look at longingly. He was never weary of toiling up and down the winding and narrow stairs of this suburban pile, and peeping into its quaint corners and cupboards, as if he expected to discover there some hitherto hidden clue to its mysterious origin. The ancient hostelries were also visited; and he smoked his pipe, and quaffed his nut-brown ale, at the old *Queen's Head*, from the festivous tankard presented by one Master Cranch (a choice spirit!) to a former host; and in the old oak parlour, too, where, according to tradition, the gallant Raleigh received 'full souse' in his face the humming contents of a jolly Black Jack from an affrighted clown, who, seeing clouds of tobacco-smoke curling from the knight's nose and mouth, thought he was all on fire! Though now (as he called himself) a country gentleman, he occasionally shared in the amusements of the town; he had formerly been a great sight-seer, and the ruling passion still followed him to this Islingtonian Tusculum."

But the out-of-town home with which, perhaps,

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Lamb's name and memory have been familiarly, though not most agreeably, associated, was Enfield, where he first settled in 1827, in the hope of recruiting his sister's health and his own by the change of air and scene, and greater freedom from miscellaneous intruders.

It was at Enfield* that Mr. Westwood first formed his acquaintance; and the acquaintance resulted in a very close intimacy. Mr. Westwood lived, in fact, next door; and he describes so well his earliest experience of his neighbours the Lambs, that I cannot, I think, do better than copy his own account: "My first glimpse of the Lamb household is as vivid in my recollection as if it were of yesterday.† It was in Enfield. Leaning idly out of a window, I saw a group of three issuing from the gamboogy-looking cottage close at hand: a slim, middle-aged man, in quaint, uncontemporary habiliments; a

* It is curious enough that there was a *Rev. Charles Lamb*, curate of Enfield, in the time of Queen Anne, who published *England Happy at Home and Abroad: a Sermon;* London, 1707, 4to. This gentleman afterwards obtained some metropolitan preferment, and published other pieces. In "A Character of the late Elia," 1823, Lamb mentions his own apprehension of being mistaken for something *parochial.*

† Mr. Westwood, who now resides abroad, in a recent private letter to a friend in England, observes of Mr. S. C. Hall's sketch of Lamb's house at Enfield: The sketch "is, in reality, the house next door (my father's house), which Lamb inhabited for a time as a lodger; his own house (that described in his letters, and by Hood, as 'gamboogy') being now so enlarged and transmogrified as to be past recognition. In some respects, however, the little dwelling depicted is the more interesting; for in it several of the later *Essays of Elia* were written. . . . The house is divided by a narrow passage; and the two sitting-rooms on the left hand in entering were those inhabited by the Lambs. Their usual snuggery was the one looking out on the garden: therein was the old library; the old engravings covered the walls; and in that quiet nook Lamb wrote—I wish I could say which of—those immortal pages. Above this room was his bedroom. An old picture of him, by Hazlitt, faced the bed." (This, which *ought* to be in the possession of our family, has been engraved for Barry Cornwall's *Memoir* (1866), but not particularly well.) "Mary Lamb's bedroom was over the front sitting-room."

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rather shapeless bundle of an old lady, in a bonnet like a mob-cap; and a young girl; while before them bounded a riotous dog (Hood's immortal 'Dash'), holding a board with 'This house to be let' on it in his jaws. Lamb was on his way back to the house-agent; and that was his fashion of announcing that he had taken the premises." The young girl was, of course, Emma Isola.

He saw more of Mr. George Daniel of Canonbury, I conjecture, after his settlement at Enfield: but Daniel and he had been more or less acquainted since 1817.

"He took to the culture of plants," notes Mr. D.; "and now, having been honoured with his commands, I was, for the first time, of some use to him. He watched the growth of his tulips with the gusto of a veteran florist, and became learned in all their gaudy varieties. He grew enamoured of anemones. He planted, pruned, and grafted; and seldom walked abroad without a bouquet in his button-hole. The rose was his favourite flower.

"If the fishes of the New River knew him not, the birds of the air did; for they congregated upon his grass-plot, perched upon his window-sills, nestled in the eaves of his housetop, responded to his whistle, pecked up his plum-cake. It became one of his amusements to watch their motions. 'Commend me,' he said, 'to the sparrows for what our friend Matthews calls, in his *At Home*, "irregular appropriation."' Seeing his growing fondness for birds, I offered him a beautiful bullfinch, ensconced in a handsome cage; but he declined the present.

"I helped him to arrange his darling folios (Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and Company) in his pleasant dining-room; to hang in the best light his portraits of the poets, and his 'Hogarths' (the latter in

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old-fashioned ebony frames*), in his newly finished drawing-room; and to adorn the mantelpieces with his Chelsea china."

An extraordinary incident befell Lamb during his residence at Enfield, which his biographers have either overlooked or suppressed.

It so happened, that a lady and her sister came over from Edmonton one day to see the Lambs at Enfield; and, in the evening, Charles saw them part of the way home. He left them at a certain point, and said he should go back straight to Mary. To Mary, however, he did *not* go straight back, but went into a roadside tavern, and called for some liquor.

This was the contingency which poor Miss Lamb was always dreading, when her brother left home for a walk in the neighbourhood, and she was not to be his companion. She often let him out at the door with: "Now, Charles, you're not going to take any ale?" And his reply would usually be, "No, no:" a reply not always acted up to.

He sat down to his refreshment, on the present occasion, near two men who, like himself, were drinking beer or spirits, and got into conversation with them. He did not know them, nor they him. Nothing more passed for the time. Lamb paid his reckoning, and went away.

A horrible murder had been perpetrated at Edmonton that very day. A man had been killed and robbed, and his body had been thrown into a ditch. The persons with

* Mr. Daniel's memory failed him here, I am afraid; for the Hogarths had been taken out of their frames several years before, and bound up together. Miss Lamb, in a letter to Miss Wordsworth, clearly written in 1817 or 1818, observes: "Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book; they were sent home yesterday; and now that I have them all together, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room."

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whom Lamb had been were the murderers. Very soon after he had quitted their society, they were arrested on the charge; and, the next morning, Lamb himself was apprehended on suspicion of being an accomplice. The matter, of course, was explained, and he was set at liberty; but the episode was a remarkable one; and it is now put forward, as I had it from the lips of one of the ladies whom he escorted home on that eventful evening.

Lamb's derangement shortly before his death is by one writer (Mr. S. C. Hall) asserted positively, and by another writer (Mr. Procter) denied positively. The latter states that "It is not true that he was ever deranged, or subjected to any restraint, shortly before his death;" adding, that he could confirm this assertion if necessary. On the other hand, Mr. Hall declares that the brother and sister were both, towards the close of 1834, under the charge of a Mrs. Bedford, at Bay Cottage, Enfield; and that his information was derived from Mrs. Bedford herself—an individual, seemingly, accustomed (as a source of livelihood) to take care of persons mentally afflicted. The author of *Recollections of Literary Persons* does not help us any further than this; but somebody else alleges, that Lamb and his sister were not kindly treated by the woman during their attacks; and this gentleman concludes by saying that, while Lamb was getting weaker and weaker (that is, in the December of 1834), his sister was to be seen at a window "tearing up a feather-bed, and scattering the feathers in the air." Mr. Fitzgerald writes emphatically: "There are those who recollect" this.

So far, however, the only point established is one which has never seriously been disputed: the unsound state of Miss Lamb's mind at this painful juncture. But a gentleman—whose acquaintance with the brother and sister was formed, I apprehend, quite towards the last—

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supplies what reads to me as an indication that Lamb was really, in the year 1834, in a condition necessitating precaution. I refer to Mr. Westwood's anecdote about the books. Lamb's conduct, as described by Mr. Westwood, was hardly that of a sane man; and there is Mr. Hall's explicit testimony to boot.

"There were few modern volumes in his collection," says Mr. Westwood; "and, *subsequently*, such presentation-copies as he received were wont to find their way into my own bookcase, and often through eccentric channels. A Leigh Hunt, for instance, would come skimming to my feet through the branches of the apple-trees (our gardens were contiguous); or a Bernard Barton would be rolled down-stairs after me from the library-door. *Marcian Colonna* I remember finding on my window-sill, damp with the night's fog; and the *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies* I picked out of the strawberry-bed." Surely it is no explanation, or, at best, a very insufficient one, that Lamb acted in a manner so extravagant from his indifference to his friends' books, "as books," and from a feeling that they—the modern authors—were out of harmony with his "midnight darlings," Chapman, Jonson, Sydney, Fulke Greville, and him of the *Religio Medici* and *Urn-Burial.*

The present is not an agreeable topic for discussion; but I am not responsible for originating it. My sole object is to get at the truth; or, rather, to get rid of what is *not* the truth. Lamb's latest biographer protests that the subject of his *Memoir* was perfectly sane to the last, with one exception, which occurred in 1795-6 (September—October, 1796). In the face of rather good evidence to the contrary, that declaration cannot be accepted without further proof. It is a mere *ipse dixit*, as it stands.

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## CHAPTER VII.

Lamb guilty of insobriety?—John Lamb—Charles Lloyd—Lamb's meaning often misunderstood—Lamb's affection for Mr. Norris—His friendship with Hone—Southey's respect for Hone—The "Extracts from the Garrick Plays"—John Clare, the Northamptonshire peasant-poet—A pleasant trait in Lamb's character—"Poor" John Morgan.

IT is less difficult to understand than to indorse Mr. Procter's allegation, that "much injustice has been done to Lamb by accusing him of excess in drinking." That Lamb drank freely can be no matter of question; and I should have felt a delicacy in touching upon the point, if it had not been already opened for discussion. Mr. Procter's denial has, in fact, forced upon me the necessity of proving to him and others, if possible, that he is wrong.* He took beer (porter, I believe, by preference) and spirits—wine, when it was to be had. My father recollects the proprietor of the neighbouring tavern sending in his account for porter—an invoice of portentous amount as regarded the pots of porter charged, but ingeniously compressed into one line, which Lamb called "truly H-Homeric!"

I have sought the opinion of one or two persons who

* Passages in Lamb's own correspondence, *if it should ever see the light in an unadulterated form*, would be quite sufficient to establish the inaccuracy of Barry Cornwall's well-meant declaration, and the complete futility of any attempt to hold such ground. But, in the absence of Lamb's own avowals, passages in his sister's letters, and the almost unanimous testimony of those few survivors who knew him personally, answer the purpose well enough. The discussion might have been better, doubtless, let alone; but as it has been raised, and an endeavour has been made to miscolour the facts, I have felt myself bound to print a good deal which I should have otherwise been inclined to suppress.

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knew Lamb, and were intimate with his circle, upon this rather awkward subject; and they met with a smile of incredulity the twofold suggestion that intemperance in his cups had been falsely imputed to him, and that, if he was ever overcome by stimulants, it was because the slightest indulgence affected him.

Here, again, I must say that I have not the remotest or faintest desire to be disrespectful to the memory of Lamb. The sole question with me is, What was the fact? Nor is it apparent that, even if the case were proved adversely, so to speak, it would detract much, or at all, from Lamb's title to our affectionate regard. Some men absolutely require, for the preservation of their mental equilibrium, more artificial excitement than others; and we need not have any doubt that Lamb stood peculiarly and exceptionally in need of it. His was a temperament and a brain which would have suffered, instead of gaining, from a too strict abstinence; and one writer thinks that his sister kept too jealous ward over him, and was a little too severe upon his peccadilloes in this direction. It should not be forgotten, that there are physicians even now, in our more refraining age, who look kindly on an occasional excess, introducing it into their pharmacopœia as an antidote to sobriety.

In "A Character of the late Elia," 1823, one of the most admirable, perhaps, of his essays, Lamb himself has touched upon this point. His words are these: "He [Elia] was temperate in his meals and diversions, *but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness.*"

An example of Lamb's obstreperous hilarity—when his senses were perfectly collected, and he was in absolute mental health—may be found in Haydon's *Autobiography;* if, at least, any thing approaching to implicit confidence is to be reposed by us in that highly unpleasant publication.



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The late Mr. George Daniel, of Canonbury, related to the writer an anecdote which, if authentic, was not less illustrative of his friend's exuberant animal spirits upon occasion. The story, such as it was, referred to Lamb's early intimacy with Coleridge, while the former was in those very elevated quarters at Mitre-Court Buildings where he could see the mast-tops on the river without getting out of bed; and before Coleridge returned from Italy "half as big as the house," as Southey told somebody. But still, at no period of his life, probably, was Coleridge a light weight; and it could have been no joke to carry him pickaback from the foot of the staircase to the top. Such was the gist of Daniel's tale. I do not rely on the details, and, therefore, do not print them.

Mr. Daniel even mentions being present one evening at Colebrook Cottage, when Hood was there, and Lamb proposed *a race round the garden*, which Hood declined.

We know that, after his mother's shocking end in the autumn of 1796, Lamb temporarily lost his reason. His state of mind has been described by some one as nervous disorder: consequently, it becomes a necessity to give the patient's own account, as it appears in the following passage from a letter to Coleridge:

"The six weeks that finished last year [1796] and began this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was; and many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume if all were told. . . . Coleridge, it may convince you of my regards for you, when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much, almost, as on another person, who, I am inclined to think, was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy. . . . The sonnet I send you ['To my Sister'] has small merit as poetry; but you will be curious to

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read it, when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid intervals."

Insanity developed itself only in one member of the Lamb family to a powerful and dangerous extent; but that it was in the father's blood, and that Charles and his brother had it in theirs, more or less dormant and innocuous, I have, personally, no doubt whatever. It was soon after the catastrophe of September 23 that the alarming accident, to which I have adverted in an earlier chapter, occurred to John Lamb. Charles, it appears from the Correspondence, had been complaining to Coleridge, just before, of his brother's want of sympathy and proper brotherly feeling; but when that brother was laid on his back helpless, and even in peril of his life, perhaps, Charles and his sister not only turned nurses, but the former tried to retract what he had let slip, in a bitterer mood, about John. He writes to Coleridge, referring to his preceding complaints of John, and to his present condition:

"Let me not leave an unfavourable impression on your mind respecting my brother. Since this has happened, he has been very kind and brotherly; but I fear for his mind; he has taken his ease in the world, and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties."

In the hour of his brother's trouble and jeopardy,—even such a lukewarm one as John Lamb,—this "gentle creature," as Coleridge affectionately termed him, lost sight of his own unhappiness and recent visitation, and upbraided himself with the harsh word which had passed from him in a moment of excitement.

I have often thought that the true solution of Lamb's eagerness latterly to collect round him a number of miscellaneous acquaintances, lay also in the necessity for constant distraction, and in the sense of relief produced upon his nervous temperament by new faces and

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new associations.* Old friends were inseparably linked in his mind and thoughts with old sorrows. It is useless to attempt to conceal his neglect of Coleridge till that great man had been removed from among the living, and could not hear his surely half-remorseful call of "Coleridge is dead!" but there is a possibility of excusing it on the plea I have put forth.

This desire for constant change was so utterly contrary to his youthful creed! What did he say to Coleridge in 1796?—

"I cannot scatter friendships like chuck-farthings, nor let them drop from mine hand like hour-glass sand. I have but two or three people in the world to whom I am more than indifferent."

And again:

"Remember you those tender lines of Logan?—

> 'Our broken friendships we deplore,
> And loves of youth that are no more;
> No other friendships e'er can raise
> Th' endearments of our early days,
> And ne'er the heart such fondness prove,
> As when we first began to love.'"

Charles Lloyd, that very early friend of Lamb's, died at Versailles a few years after him, in a state of mental derangement. He seems, so far as I can recollect, to have been subject, more or less, during his whole life, to attacks of mental despondency and aberration.† Mr.

* Perhaps he would give a different reason for his strange neglect of early friends—of men like Coleridge and Wordsworth—where, in "A Character of the late Elia" (*London Magazine*, Jan. 1823; or *Elia*, 1833, p. x.), he says: "He [Elia] had a general aversion from being treated like a grave and respectable person, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age, that should so entitle him. *He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself.*"

† The slender notices of Charles Lloyd which occur in books of and after his time, scarcely prepare us to expect the tolerably voluminous

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Procter says: "The last time I saw Charles Lloyd was in company with Hazlitt. We heard that he had taken lodgings at a working brazier's shop in Fetter Lane, and we visited him there, and found him in bed, much depressed, but very willing to discuss certain problems with Hazlitt, who carried on the greater part of the conversation. We understood that he had selected these noisy apartments in order that they might distract his mind from the fears and melancholy thoughts which at that time distressed him."*

Now, elsewhere, Mr. Procter is led in the natural course of his narrative to speak of the beginning of his real intimacy with Lamb, and he tells us that this was in 1818, when Lamb and his sister removed to Russell Street, Covent Garden: "They lived in the corner house, adjoining Bow Street.† This house belonged, at

catalogue of works for which he is responsible. I believe that the following is a complete list; but I am not sure:

1. *Poems on Various Subjects.* Carlisle, 1795, 8vo.

2. *Blank Verse by Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb.* London, 1798, 8vo.

3. *Desultory Thoughts in London, &c.* London, 1820, 12mo.

4. *Poetical Essays* (on Pope, &c.). London, 1821, 12mo.

5. *The Duke d'Ormond, &c.* London, 1822, 12mo. (*The Duke d'Ormond*, the author tells us, was written in 1798.)

6. *Poems.* London, 1823, 12mo.

It is, perhaps, worthy of remark, that in some stanzas inserted in *Poems by Charles Lloyd*, 1823, a passage from Lamb's *Elia*—only just published, and almost wet from the press—is prefixed as a motto. Lloyd must have bought or received the book almost at the very instant of publication.

* "It would give me much pleasure to know Mr. Lloyd. Do you know, when I was in Cumberland, I got Southey to borrow a copy of Berkeley from him; and I remember observing some pencil notes in it, probably written by Lloyd, which I thought particularly acute."—*Shelley to Leigh Hunt*, Sept. 27, 1819.

† The corner of Russell Street, with the two houses right and left, one in Bow Street and the other in Russell Street, constituted the original *Will's Coffee-House*. Perhaps Birmingham possessed a charm for poor Lloyd on the same account. Compare chap. vi., *suprà*.

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that time, to an ironmonger (or brazier), and was comfortable and clean—and a little noisy."

The question I want to ask is, Have we here a mere coincidence—the two friends both selecting the upper part of a brazier's shop for a residence? Or have we only to accept the inference that the noise had the same recommendation in Lamb's eyes that it had in Lloyd's? Lamb himself gives us to understand that he could not "sit and think"—he must always be doing something when he was at home; and, perhaps, when he was tired of reading, and there was no one to talk to, the sound of the hammer in the shop below was not unwelcome.

It may be worth remarking that Lamb had no faith in that maxim, "Great wits are sure to madness near allied."* At least, in his essay "On the Sanity of true Genius," he has set himself to the task of rebutting it, and proving it a popular fallacy. Nor was he an exception to the rule which he has laid down there, "that the greatest wits will ever be found to be the sanest writers." Notwithstanding his constitutional proneness to a distressing malady, there is not, I believe, a single passage throughout his works, capable of demonstrating such a fact—his own confessions reserved.

Lamb once said that Voltaire was a very good Jesus Christ for the French: and at another time he informed a lady, who spoke in high terms of some gentleman, and mentioned herself as knowing him intimately (there are conflicting versions of the story, as before pointed out), that he did not know him, but "damned him at a venture." Now, I, for one, should be very sorry indeed to find these at first sight rather startling utterances adduced as proofs of mental unsoundness; because, in the first place, it was not that Lamb entertained such an

* It occurs to me that this is merely an English paraphrase of the Latin—"Sine aliquâ dementiâ, nullus Phœbus."

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opinion about Voltaire, or, secondly, that he wished any harm to the gentlewoman's friend. He wanted to observe the effect produced upon his hearers by these heterodoxies, and took a pleasure in pushing to the last verge his expressions of sentiment or assertions of fact. "He affected too much that dangerous figure, irony."*

It was with Lamb's conversation in its more whimsical aspects, as it seems, from his own avowal, to have been with his reading: he disliked to be pent up by conventional forms and prejudices. He says, in one of his Essays:

"I confess for myself that (with no great delinquencies to answer for) I am glad for a season to take an airing beyond the diocese of the strict conscience,—not to live always in the precincts of the law-courts,—but now and then, for a dream-while or so, to imagine a world with no meddling restrictions—to get into recesses whither the hunter cannot follow me:

> 'Secret shades
> Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
> While yet there was no fear of Jove.'

I come back to my cage and my restraint the fresher and more healthy for it. I wear my shackles more contentedly for having respired the breath of an imaginary freedom. I do not know how it is with others, but I feel the better always for the perusal of one of Congreve's —nay, why should I not add even of Wycherly's?—comedies."

Let us pass to pleasanter ground. In the entire history of Lamb, I scarcely know of a more touching passage than that where he refers, in a letter to

* In the Preface to the second series (last Essays) of *Elia*, 1833, p. vii., Lamb pretends to describe the phantom Elia, and says: "Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself."

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a friend, to the loss of Mr. Randall Norris, in the January of 1826:* "He was my friend, and my father's friend, all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Old as I am, in his eyes I was all the child he first knew me. To the last he called me 'Charley.' I have none to call me 'Charley' now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple."

A fine piece of English! Touching, telling sentences! The "dumb eloquence," described by Hazlitt, soundingly articulate! In the death of one so dear, he seemed to foreshadow his own. His boyhood appeared to belong all at once to a remoter past. This was one of the "old, familiar faces"—the last of them. His friendship with Mr. Norris dated back far beyond his earliest knowledge of Coleridge and Southey. Talfourd, Cary, and acquaintances of that class, were men "but of yesterday," compared with this old man, who "called him Charley," and who had been "his father's friend."

A most agreeable and honourable feature in Lamb's character, and one which reflected credit equally almost on his head and his heart, was his behaviour to that eminent and unfortunate man, William Hone. Lamb's nature drew him instinctively towards those whom adversity had smitten: but in this attachment to Hone there was more than a mere sympathy with ill-luck and suffering. The author of the *Every-Day Book* and himself had common tastes and predilections. They were both *laudatores temporis acti.* Both were antiquaries, each in his way; and neither was a simple virtuoso.

Lamb appears to have made the acquaintance of Hone in 1827, while the *Table Book* was in the press. Lamb wrote a letter to the editor, proposing the inser-

* He was buried at Widford, Herts; to the church of which village (now restored) Lamb more than once alludes.

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Rosamond Gray's Cottage.

Widford Church.

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tion, at intervals, of "Extracts from the Garrick Plays" in the British Museum; and Hone, of course, was only too glad to carry out the idea. A correspondence followed; of how many letters it consisted I am not sure,—I have traced five-and-twenty. Not one of these is given by Talfourd; and, if I am not mistaken, the name of Hone is only once, and then incidentally, mentioned by Barry Cornwall.

Hone was not a *genteel* man. Men in power looked askance at him, and their friends and hangers-on could only follow suit. His circumstances were never flourishing; at one time they became so desperate that he was obliged to set up his family in a coffee-shop in Gracechurch Street. Lamb helped him in his extremity, and procured him help from others. He even appealed to the Rev. Edward Irving in his behalf, and the letter in which he did so is extant. In one of the notes which he sent to Hone, while this was going on, Lamb added the humorous postscript, "Vivant Coffee Coffee-potsque!" A new edition of Lamb's *Works* ought to embrace the whole correspondence; but three or four letters, not hitherto printed, I am enabled, meanwhile, to introduce into this volume in their proper place. Some of his friends at the time may have thought differently; but, in my judgment, the liking and goodness of Lamb to a persecuted and deserving man were the truest philanthropy.

In a letter from Southey to his friend Rickman, of July 16, 1829, and in one to Lamb himself of May 20, 1830, Hone is mentioned in terms which do the writer particular honour, when it is considered how universally the author of the *House that Jack Built* was laid under a ban. In the letter to Rickman, Southey, who was a thoroughly good-hearted fellow at bottom, says: "Remember me most kindly to Lamb, and tell him that

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the *Every-Day* and *Table Books* have given me a great liking for his friend Hone, whom I would shake hands with heartily if I came in his way, or he lay in mine."

A gentleman is living who well remembers seeing, in the old reading-room at the British Museum, a gentleman with a head which seemed to him oddly disproportioned to the rest of his person, seated at one of the tables, and busily extracting passages from a pile of old pamphlets in front of him. It was Charles Lamb at work upon his "Specimens of the Garrick Plays" for friend Hone's *Table Book*.*

But Hone was not the only individual who sympathised with Lamb, and with whom Lamb sympathised in turn, in love and zeal for the old poets and playwrights. The attention of John Clare, the Northamptonshire peasant-poet, had been, in the first instance, directed to Lamb's writings by the perusal of *John Woodvil*, printed in the year 1802, a copy of which had fallen in Clare's way, and had produced a favourable impression of the author's descriptive power. The "Specimens of Dramatic Writers," and the "Extracts from the Garrick Plays," in the *Table Book*, completed the conquest of Clare's heart, and elicited from him this poetical tribute:

"To Charles Lamb, Esq.

"Friend Lamb, thy choice was good, to love the lore
Of our old bygone bards, whose racy page
Rich mellowing Time makes sweeter than before
The blossom left,—for the long-garnered store
Of fruitage, now right luscious in its age,

* The original MS. is now in the national Library. With regard to Lamb's slightness of make and figure, Mr. Charles Tween, whose family intermarried with those cherished friends of Lamb's, the Norrises, relates that, when he was a young man, he well recollects, when out walking with Lamb, putting his hands under Lamb's arms, when they came to a stile, and literally lifting him over without any further effort.

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Although to Fashion's taste austere,—what more
Can be expected from the popular rage
For tinsel gauds that are to gold preferred?
Me much it grieves; as I didst erst presage,
Vain Fashion's foils had every heart deterred
From the warm, homely phrase of other days,
Until thy *Woodvil's* ancient voice I heard.
And now right fain, yet fearing, honest bard,
I pause to greet thee with so poor a praise."

A curious and impressive trait in Lamb's character, which I do not recollect to have seen noticed, is disclosed in a letter from Southey to his friend Grosvenor Bedford, of December 3, 1819. Southey writes as follows: "I must trespass on you further; and request that you will seal up ten pounds, and leave it with Rickman for Charles Lamb, Esq., from R. S. It is for poor John Morgan, whom you may remember some twenty years ago. This poor fellow—whom I knew at school, and whose mother has sometimes asked me to her table when I should have otherwise gone without a dinner—was left with a fair fortune, from 10,000*l.* to 15,000*l.*; and, without any vice or extravagance of his own, he has lost the whole of it. A stroke of the palsy has utterly disabled him from doing any thing to maintain himself. His wife—a good-natured, kind-hearted woman, whom I knew in her bloom, beauty, and prosperity—has accepted a situation as mistress of a charity-school, with a miserable salary of 40*l.* a year; and this is all they have. In this pitiable case, Lamb and I have promised him 10*l.* a year each, as long as he lives. I have got 5*l.* a year for him from an excellent fellow, whom you do not know, and who chooses on this occasion to be called A. B.; and I have written to his Bristol friends. . . . You will understand that this is an *explanation* to you, and not an *application*."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Lamb and Leigh Hunt—Hunt's epistle to Lamb in 1818—Lamb's letters to Hunt—Lamb's death—Accounts of his last moments—His letter to Miss Norris respecting his funeral—The epitaph upon him—Christopher North's tardy regrets.

ONE of Leigh Hunt's "Familiar Epistles in Verse"* to certain of his friends is addressed to Lamb; it touches very prettily on the visits which Charles and his sister used to pay to Hunt at Hampstead in all weathers; and it might have supplied a hint or two to a biographer who was desirous of tracing the relations between these two eminent contemporaries:

"To CHARLES LAMB.

"O thou, whom old Homer would call, were he living,
Home-lover, thought-feeder, abundant joke-giving,
Whose charity springs from deep knowledge, nor swerves
Into mere self-reflections, or scornful reserves,—
In short, who wert made for two centuries ago,
When Shakespeare drew men, and to write was to know,—

"You'll guess why I can't see the snow-covered streets
Without thinking of you and your visiting feats,
When you call to remembrance how you and one more,
When I wanted it most, used to knock at my door;
For, when the sad winds told us rain would come down,
Or snow upon snow fairly clogged up the town,
And dun, yellow fogs brooded over its white,
So that scarcely a being was seen towards night,
Then—then said the lady yclept near and dear:
'Now, mind what I tell you—the Lambs will be here.'

* *Foliage; or, Poems Original and Translated.* By Leigh Hunt. 1818. This has become a scarce volume; and I thought it desirable, therefore, to bring within reach the Epistle to Lamb, just as it was written, in the full greenness of the friendship between him and Hunt.

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So I poked up the flame, and she got out the tea,
And down we both sat, as prepared as could be;
And there, sure as fate, came the knock of you two,
Then the lanthorn, the laugh, and the 'Well, how d'ye do?'

"Then your palm tow'rds the fire, and your face turned to me,
And shawls and great-coats being where they should be,
And due 'never saws' being paid to the weather,
We cherished our knees, and sat sipping together;
And, leaving the world to the fogs and the fighters,
Discussed the pretensions of all sorts of writers:
Of Shakespeare's coevals, all spirits divine;
Of Chapman, whose Homer's a fine rough old wine;
Of Marvel, wit, patriot, poet, who knew
How to give, both at once, Charles and Cromwell their due;
Of Spenser, who wraps you, wherever you are,
In a bow'r of seclusion beneath a sweet star;
Of Richardson, too, who afflicts us so long,
We begin to suspect him of nerves over-strong;
In short, of all those who give full-measured page—
Not forgetting Sir Thanas, my ancestor sage,
Who delighted (so happy were all his digestions)
In puzzling his head with impossible questions.

"But *now*, Charles, you never (so blissful you deem me)
Come lounging, with twirl of umbrella, to see me.
In vain have we hoped to be set at our ease
By the rains—which, you know, used to bring Lamb and pease—
In vain we look out, like the children in Thomson,
And say, in our innocence, 'Surely he'll come soon!'

"'Tis true, I do live in a vale at my will,
With sward to my gateway, and trees on the hill;
My health, too, gets on; and, now autumn is nigh,
The sun has come back, and there's really blue sky;
But, then, the late weather, I think, had its merits,
And might have induced you to look at one's spirits.
We hadn't much thunder and lightning, I own;
But the rains might have led you to walk out o' town:
And, what made us think your desertion still stranger,
The roads were so bad, there was really some danger,—
At least, where I live; for the nights were so groping,
The rains made such wet, and the paths are so sloping,
That few, unemboldened by youth or by drinking,
Came down without lanthorns—nor then without shrinking;

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And, really, to see the bright spots come and go,
As the path rose or fell, was a fanciful show:
Like fairies they seemed, pitching up from their nooks,
And twinkling upon us their bright little looks;
Or, if there appeared but a single, slow light,
It seemed Polyphemus descending by night
To walk in his anguish about the green places,
And see where his mistress lay dreaming of Acis.

"I fancy him now, coming just where she sleeps:
He parts the close hawthorns and bushes, and creeps;
The moon slips from under the dark clouds, and throws
A light through the leaves on her smiling repose:
There, there she lies bowered,—a slope for her bed;
One branch, like a hand, reaches over her head;
Half-naked, half-shrinking, with side-swelling grace,
A crook's 'twixt her bosom, and crosses her face,—

"The crook of her shepherd,—and close to her lips,
Like the Pan-pipe he blows, which in sleeping she sips.
The giant's knees totter with passions diverse.
Ah, how can he bear it? Oh, what could be worse?
He's ready to cry out for anguish of heart,
And tears himself off; but she wakes with a start."

There are several letters, also, extant from Lamb to Hunt: a circumstance which might have been advantageously brought under the notice of Barry Cornwall.* The visits which the author of *Rimini* received in 1813, during his confinement in Horsemonger-Lane Gaol, from the Lambs, are very feelingly and gratefully recorded in Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography*.

Considering Lamb's large circle of admiring friends, it is very remarkable that, in his latest moments, he appears to have been comparatively deserted. I cannot find that any of the familiar names and faces were near, when he drew his last breath. Mr. Ryle, of the India House, called on him a few days before his decease, and

* Some of these are inserted among the Inedited Remains; one or two (by the permission of Mr. Thornton Hunt) I have taken from the Correspondence of his father, edited by him in 1860.

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communicated to Mr. Justice Talfourd, who, with him, was appointed under Lamb's will to execute his testamentary dispositions, the fact that there was danger. Talfourd, thereupon, went over to Edmonton, and saw Lamb; whom he found very weak, his voice scarcely audible, but his spirits still pretty good. Let me transfer hither Talfourd's account of his proceeding:

"I went over to Edmonton on the following morning, and found him very weak, and nearly insensible to things passing around him. Now and then, a few words were audible, from which it seemed that his mind, in its feebleness, was intent on kind and hospitable thoughts. His last correspondent, Mr. Childs, had sent a present of a turkey, instead of the suggested pig; and the broken sentences which could be heard were of some meeting of friends to partake of it. I do not think he knew me; and, having vainly tried to engage his attention, I quitted him, not believing his death so near at hand."

I wish now to place side by side, as it were, with this rather strange narrative (as I read it), an extract from Mr. T. Westwood's "Recollections:"

"My last meeting with Lamb," he says, "took place at Edmonton shortly before his decease. We had a pleasant ramble along the green Edmonton lanes, turning in more than once at wayside hostels, such as Walton would have delighted in, and moistening our discourse with draughts from the unsophisticated pewter. For each host or hostess my companion had his joke or his salutation, and was clearly an honoured and familiar presence. Later in the evening, when the lamp was lit, I ventured to slip into his hand that worst of all literary scarecrows, a volume of manuscript juvenile verse. With his customary kindness and patience he deciphered the weary pages, bantered me occasionally on my misanthropic and ultra-despairing moods, and

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selected for commendation such of the pieces as were simplest and sincerest. In the latter contingency, Mary Lamb was usually called in for confirmation. Then we parted: and a few days later that grave was dug; and one of the sweetest-natured, truest, most genial-hearted creatures God ever blessed the world with, went down into it."

"His melancholy accident," the late Mr. Daniel writes, "and its fatal result, were unknown to me until one dark and chilly day in December [1834], when, anticipating (alas for the uncertainties of poor human nature!) his wonted warm welcome, I reached his lodgings. The window-shutters were closed: I stood hesitating, afraid to knock at the door. The dismal, heart-breaking death-bell tolled heavily! Could its knell be for sister Mary? A not unlikely surmise, for she was ailing, and some years his senior. I crossed over to the churchyard, and stood beside an open and very deep grave. It was for *Elia!* Many surprises and shocks I have suffered in my life, but none so sudden and so sad as this."

I believe I have almost, or quite, exhausted the sources to which we have to go for information respecting the death-bed of Lamb. What does Barry Cornwall add to the stock of knowledge?—Nothing. Or Mr. Fitzgerald?—Nothing.

Hazlitt and Coleridge were no more; Lloyd, Southey, and Wordsworth, were far away; Miss Lamb herself had been very ill, and was still very poorly—too much so to be permitted to see him before he died. But where was that bevy of more or less recent acquaintances who grouped themselves round the Lambs in these latter days, and whose room, if some passages in the letters may be taken literally, was—to borrow the common phrase—now and then more welcome than their company?

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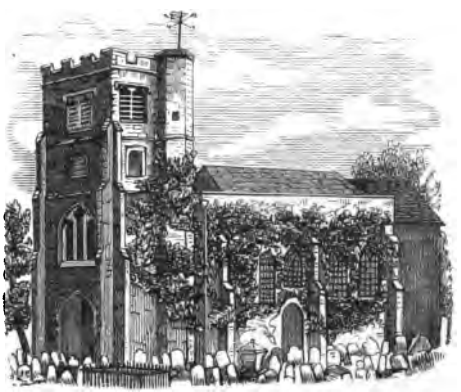
House at Edmonton where Lamb died.



Edmonton Church.

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Possibly, the loss to him was not so great an one, after all. It was not as if Coleridge could have been there, and was not. Then we might have said truly, as Tacitus said of Agricola: "Paucioribus tamen lachrymis compositus es, et novissimâ in luce desideravere aliquid oculi tui."

Lamb's death is well known to have been precipitated by an accident. He stumbled against a stone in one of his walks, and fell. An Edmonton tradesman, who lived nearly opposite to Bay Cottage,* came to his assistance, and helped him to rise. Erysipelas set in, and the result was fatal. A recent† correspondent of *Notes and Queries* has conversed with the man who witnessed the accident, and who was able to render prompt aid to the sufferer.

I find another communication to that periodical, where the writer regrets the substitution of Mr. Cary's epitaph upon Lamb's grave, for the lines which Wordsworth had written for the same purpose. This gentleman must surely have overlooked, for the moment, the fact that the late poet-laureate's tribute to the memory of one he so loved extends (at least, in the edition before me) to a page and a half of royal octavo, double columns; and, besides, whatever may be the case at present, there was, as somebody has suggested, another reason why Wordsworth's elegiac poem could not at that time be inscribed on the monument.

Personally, there is much even in Wordsworth's lines which seems to meet the occasion imperfectly, and to be hardly worthy of the pen from which they proceeded. Perhaps the theme proved a little embarrassing. I could (if it were permissible) take the beginning and

* Mr. S. C. Hall speaks of a Bay Cottage, *Enfield*. Bay Cottage, Edmonton, was Mr. Walden's.

† September 22, 1866.



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finishing lines, and make out of them, by themselves, enough to satisfy *me*. Thus:

> "To a good Man of most dear memory,
> This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
> From the great city where he first drew breath,
> Was reared and taught. * * *
> * * * * The sacred tie
> Is broken: yet, why grieve? For Time but holds
> His moiety in trust, till joy shall lead
> To the blest world where parting is unknown."

In a letter to Miss Norris, afterwards Mrs. Charles Tween, Lamb had given minute and humorous instructions for his own funeral, even specifying the number of nails which he desired to be inserted in his coffin. The letter was lent by the family to the late Mr. Moxon, and was never recovered.*

The *Saturday Review*, in one of its numbers for October, 1862, speaking of the spot where the two Lambs, brother and sister, repose together, observes: "In the churchyard of Edmonton, the inquiring traveller may, after considerable search, find the grave of Charles and Mary Lamb. The churchyard is large, and has an air of neglect and desolation; and one of the most neglected parts of it is the grave of the man whose memory gives the whole scene an interest. The grave is a little way back from a side-path, and is overgrown with nettles and long grass; while over it towers a hideous erection, of the fluted order of village architecture, designed to perpetuate the fame of a certain Gideon Rippon, of Eagle House."†

Even before Lamb's death, the tide of public

* This is somewhat in keeping with his autobiography in the *New Monthly Magazine* for 1835 (reprinted in *Eliana*, 1864, p. 137).

† A plan for restoring the stone, and setting the grave in order, was announced a year or two ago; I do not know whether it has been carried out.

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opinion turned in his favour; in *Blackwood* for 1833, Christopher North had a paper called *Twaddle on Tweed-side*, in which the character and abilities of Elia were estimated rather differently than in one or two old numbers of the *Quarterly*, or, indeed, of that same *Blackwood*. The author of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* thought Lamb, on his part, too severe on the Scots:

"Charles Lamb," says he, "ought really not to abuse Scotland in the pleasant way he so often does, in the sylvan shades of Enfield; for Scotland loves Charles Lamb. But he is wayward and wilful in his wisdom, and conceits that many a Cockney is a better man even than Christopher North. But what will not Christopher forgive to genius and goodness? Even Lamb bleating libels on his native land. Nay, he learns lessons of humanity even from the mild malice of Elia, and breathes a blessing on him and his household in their bower of rest."

Very pretty, to be sure! The pity was, that Scotland (that is to say, Christopher North) did not discover this love for Charles Lamb a little sooner. I do not know whether his tardy benevolence extended to the author of *Table Talk*, whom he had not done much else than abuse for twenty years, as I have understood that it did to the editor of the *Examiner;* but I am sure that Mr. Hazlitt would have spurned with contempt any such apology at the eleventh hour: nor do I imagine that Lamb (if he ever saw the article) valued at a very high rate the blessing breathed on him and his household by the editor of *Blackwood*—these late and clumsy courtesies from Christopher!*

* Although the late Professor Wilson expressed to Mr. Leigh Hunt his regret at what had appeared in the pages of *Blackwood*, it does not seem to have occurred to him to suppress the offensive passages when his papers were collected, or to direct that they should be

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It is well known that Miss Lamb survived her brother many years. I remember that when she visited my father's house at Brompton, about 1843, she was accompanied by three or four snuff-boxes, which came empty, and went away full; and by at least four large silk pocket-handkerchiefs, one of which was devoted to the reception of some article from the dinner-table, which happened to strike her fancy, and which she conveyed back with much satisfaction to St. John's Wood, where she lived at that time, and where she died. I met her also at Sir John Stoddart's, in the immediate neighbourhood of our house at Brompton, and the same thing took place. It was the poor old lady's whim, and of course she was humoured in it by every one. Sir John had to send out to the nearest tobacconist's, and get all the boxes filled; and a leg of a fowl, or some other dainty morsel which had been selected, was duly wrapped up in a Bandana.

omitted. Consequently, they remain intact. Their republication, after Wilson's apology to Mr. Hunt, was a source of much surprise to the latter.

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# INEDITED REMAINS

OF

# CHARLES LAMB.

LAMB'S uncollected pieces are very numerous indeed, and of very unequal worth. Perhaps he was nearer to the truth than he imagined when he said of the second series of *Elia*, that all the humour of the thing had evaporated, if there was ever any humour at all, after the first publication in 1823. He never did any thing—except, perhaps, the paper on Hogarth—which approached in merit the contents of that admirable volume, during the eleven years from 1823 to 1834.

All his periodical writings, all his plays, and all his poems, are necessary, however, to a complete edition of his works; and the papers here assembled together may, therefore, form a not unacceptable supplement to all the editions. For my own part, I should be satisfied with *Elia*, *Rosamund Gray*, *John Woodvil*, the "Farewell to Tobacco," the Hogarth Essay, and the Letters. We must have the last, not as Talfourd has given them to us, but as Lamb wrote them—*ipsissimis verbis*. Talfourd has helped us to bits of them—those bits which he thought nicest and prettiest; but, if we could have the true text, we should be better pleased on the whole. Upon a moderate calculation, the collection formed by Talfourd does not represent *a moiety* of the total. Where, let me ask,

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is the correspondence with Hone, with the Holcrofts, with Cottle, with Hunt, with Collier, and with Novello?* A contemporary of Lamb's was lately, and may be yet, living, who possesses a series of letters, not one of which has seen the light.

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## *POEMS.*

### LIVING WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.†

MYSTERY of God! thou brave & beauteous world!
Made fair with light, & shade, & stars, & flowers;
Made fearful and august with woods & rocks,
Jagg'd precipice, black mountain, sea in storms;
Sun, over all—that no co-rival owns,
But thro' heaven's pavement rides in despite
Or mockery of the Littleness of Man!
I see a mighty Arm, by Man unseen,
Resistless—not to be controuled; that guides,
In solitude of unshared energies,
All these thy ceaseless miracles, O World!
Arm of the world, I view thee, & I muse
On Man; who, trusting in his mortal strength,
Leans on a shadowy staff—a staff of dreams.

We consecrate our total hopes and fears
To idols, flesh & blood, our love (heaven's due),
Our praise & admiration; praise bestowed

* Some portions of this correspondence are now, for the first time, printed from the originals in the British Museum and elsewhere. The kindness of friends has supplied several new letters and poems.

† From a MS. in the handwriting of Robert Southey, *circâ* 1799; formerly the property of Joseph Cottle, of Bristol, and now in the possession of F. W. Cosens, Esq., of Clapham Park. These lines originally appeared in the *Annual Anthology*.

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By man on man, and acts of worship done
To a kindred nature, certes do reflect
Some portion of the glory, & rays oblique,
Upon the politic worshipper—so man
Extracts a pride from his humility.
Some braver spirits, of the modern stamp,
Affect a Godhead nearer: these talk loud
Of mind, & independent intellect;
Of energies omnipotent in man;
And man of his own fate artificer—
Yea, of his own life lord, & of the days
Of his abode on earth, when time shall be
That life immortal shall become an Art;
Or Death, by chemic practices deceived,
Forego the scent which for six thousand years,
Like a good hound, he has followed, or at length,
More manners learning, & a decent sense,
And rev'rence of a philosophic world,
Relent, & leave to prey on carcasses.

But these are fancies of a few: the rest,
Atheists, or Deists only in the name,
By word or deed deny a God. They eat
Their daily bread, & draw the breath of heaven,
Without a thought or thanks; heav'n's roof to them
Is but a painted ceiling hung with lamps,
No more, that light them to their purposes.
They "wander loose about." They nothing see,
Themselves except, and creatures like themselves,
That liv'd short-sighted, impotent to save.
So on their dissolute spirits, soon or late,
Destruction cometh "like an armed man,"
Or like a dream of murder in the night,
Withering their mortal faculties, & breaking
The bones of all their pride.—

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## A PARODY.*

LAZY-BONES, lazy-bones, wake up and peep;
The Cat's in the cupboard, your Mother's asleep.
There you sit snoring, forgetting her ills:
Who is to give her her Bolus and Pills?
Twenty-five Angels must come into Town,
All for to help you to make your new gown—
Dainty AERIAL Spinsters & Singers:
Aren't you asham'd to employ such white fingers?
Delicate Hands, unaccustom'd to reels,
To set 'em a washing at poor body's wheels?
Why they came down is to me all a riddle,
And left HALLELUJAH broke off in the middle.
Jove's Court & the Presence Angelical cut,
To eke out the work of a lazy young slut.
Angel-duck, angel-duck, wingèd & silly,
Pouring a watering pot over a lily,
Gardener gratuitous, careless of pelf,
Leave her to water her Lily herself,
Or to neglect it to death, if she chuse it;
Remember, the loss is her own if she lose it.

## LINES SUGGESTED BY A SIGHT OF WALTHAM CROSS.

TIME-MOULDERING crosses, gemmed with imagery
Of costliest work and Gothic tracery,
Point still the spot, to hallowed Wedlock dear,
Where rested on its solemn way the bier
That bore the bones of Edward's Elinor
To mix with Royal dust at Westminster.

* I found these lines—a parody on the popular, or nursery, ditty, "Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home"—officiating as a wrapper to some of Mr. Hazlitt's hair. There is no signature; but the handwriting is unmistakably Lamb's; nor are the lines themselves the worst of his playful effusions.

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Far different rites did thee to dust consign,
Duke Brunswick's daughter, princely Caroline:
A hurrying funeral, and a banished grave,
High-minded Wife, were all that thou couldst have.
Grieve not, great Ghost, nor count in death in losses;
Thou in thy life-time hadst thy share of *crosses*

## A SONNET.*

THEY talk of Time, and of Time's galling yoke,
That like a millstone on man's mind doth press,
Which only works and business can redress:
Of divine Leisure such foul lies are spoke,
Wounding her fair gifts with calumnious stroke.
But might I, fed with silent meditation,
Assoilèd live from that fiend Occupation,—
*Improbus labor*, which my spirit has broke,—
I'd drink of Time's rich cup, and never surfeit;
Fling in more days than went to make the gem
That crown'd the white top of Methusalem;
Yea, on my weak neck take, and never forfeit—
Like Atlas bearing up the dainty sky—
The heav'n-sweet burthen of eternity.

## A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.†

"Fie upon't!
All men are false, I think. The date of love
Is out, expired, its stories all grown stale,
O'erpast, forgotten, like an antique tale
Of Hero and Leander." JOHN WOODVIL.

ALL are not false. I knew a youth who died
For grief, because his Love proved so,

* I owe this little piece, never before printed, to the kindness of D. C. Higgs, Esq.

† For this little relic I am indebted to the kindness of Theodore Martin, Esq.

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And married with another.
I saw him on the wedding-day,—
For he was present in the church that day,
In festive bravery decked,
As one that came to grace the ceremony,—
I marked him when the ring was given:
His Countenance never changed;
And, when the priest pronounced the marriage blessing,
He put a silent prayer up for the bride—
For so his moving lip interpreted.
He came invited to the marriage-feast
With the bride's friends,
And was the merriest of them all that day:
But they who knew him best called it feigned mirth;
And others said
He wore a smile like death upon his face.
His presence dashed all the beholders' mirth,
And he went away in tears.
*What followed then?*
O then
He did not, as neglected suitors use,
Affect a life of solitude in shades,
But lived
In free discourse and sweet society
Among his friends who knew his gentle nature best.
Yet ever, when he smiled,
There was a mystery legible in his face;
But whoso saw him, said he was a man
Not long for this world—
And true it was; for even then
The silent love was feeding at his heart,
Of which he died;
Nor ever spoke word of reproach;
Only, he wished in death that his remains
Might find a poor grave in some spot not far

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From his mistress' family vault—being the place
Where one day Anna should herself be laid.

### THE CHRISTENING.*

ARRAYED—a half angelic sight—
In nests of pure baptismal white,
The mother to the font doth bring
The little, helpless, nameless thing,
With hushes soft, and mild caressing,
At once to get—a name and blessing!
Close to the babe the priest doth stand,
The sacred water at his hand,
That must assoil the soul within
From every stain of Adam's sin.
The Infant eyes the mystic scenes,
Nor knows what all this wonder means;
And now he smiles, as if to say,
"I am a Christian made to-day;"
Now, frighted, clings to nurse's hold,
Shrinking from the water cold,
Whose virtues, rightly understood,
Are, as Bethesda's waters, good—

* Copies of these verses are still preserved at Enfield. They were written by Lamb to celebrate the christening of the son of Charles and Mary Gisburne May there, March 25, 1829; when Miss Lamb and her brother stood sponsors. Mr. Tuff, the historian of Enfield, writes: "I knew both the families [the Mays and Gisburnes]. The head of the first was Dr. May, who conducted a first-class school for nearly half a century. He occupied the 'Old Palace,' hence it was called *The Palace School.* The Doctor had a brother, Charles May, who married Miss Gisburne, mistress of a ladies' school here many years. The child of Charles and Mary May, for whom Lamb and his sister stood sponsors, was the issue of this marriage. There is nothing in the parish book, beyond the signatures of Charles May and his wife. Dr. May educated, amongst many citizens' sons, the present Baron Bramwell, the eminent judge."

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Strange words! "The World, the Flesh, the Devil."
Poor Babe, what can *it* know of evil?
But we must silently adore
Mysterious truths, and not explore.
Enough for him, in after times,
When he shall read these artless rhymes,
If, looking back upon this day,
With easy conscience he can say—
"I have in part redeemed the pledge
Of my baptismal privilege
And vow, and more will strive to flee
All that my sponsors kind renounced for me.

### A BIRTHDAY THOUGHT.*

CAN I, all-gracious Providence,
Can I deserve Thy care?
Ah no! I've not the least pretence
To bounties which I share.

Have I not been defended still
From dangers and from death;
Been safe preserved from every ill
E'er since Thou gavest me breath?

I live once more to see the day
That brought me first to light;
Oh, teach my willing heart the way
To take Thy mercies right.

Tho' dazzling splendour, pomp, and show
My fortune has denied;
Yet more than grandeur can bestow
Content hath well supplied.

* From *Poetry for Children*, 1809 (as reprinted in the *First Book of Poetry*, 1828).

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I envy no one's birth or fame,
Their titles, train, or dress;
Nor has my pride e'er stretch'd its aim
Beyond what I possess.

I ask and wish not to appear
More beauteous, rich, or gay:
Lord, make me wiser every year,
And better every day.

---

## *LETTERS.*

### *To Robert Southey.*

[No superscription.]

THE following is a second extract from my Tragedy *that is to be*,—'tis narrated by an old steward to Margaret, orphan ward of Sir Walter Woodvil;—this, and the Dying Lover I gave you, are the only extracts I can give without mutilation. I expect you to like the old woman's curse:

OLD STEWARD.

One summer night, Sir Walter, as it chanc'd,
Was pacing to & fro in the avenue
That westward fronts our house,
Among those aged oaks, said to have been planted
Three hundred years ago
By a neighb'ring Prior of the Woodvil name.
But so it was,
Being overtask't in thought, he heeded not
The importune suitor who stood by the gate,
And beg'd an alms.
Some say he shov'd her rudely from the gate

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With angry chiding; but I can never think
(Sir Walter's nature hath a sweetness in it)
That he would use a woman—an old woman—
With such discourtesy;
For old she was who beg'd an alms of him.
Well, he refus'd her;
Whether for importunity, I know not,
Or that she came between his meditations.
But better had he met a Lion in the streets,
Than this old woman that night;
For she was one who practis'd the black arts,
And serv'd the devil—being since burn'd for witchcraft.
She look'd at him like one that meant to blast him,
And with a frightful noise
('Twas partly like a woman's voice,
And partly like the hissing of a snake)
She nothing said but this (Sir Walter told the words):

"A mischief, mischief, mischief,
And a nine-times killing curse,
By day and by night, to the caitive wight
Who shakes the poor like snakes from his door,
And shuts up the womb of his purse;
And a mischief, mischief, mischief,
And a nine-fold withering curse,—
For that shall come to thee, that will render thee
Both all that thou fear'st, and worse."

These words four times repeated, she departed,
Leaving Sir Walter like a man beneath
Whose feet a scaffolding had suddenly fal'n:
So he describ'd it.

MARGARET.

A terrible curse!

OLD STEWARD.

O Lady, such bad things are told of that old woman,
As, namely, that the milk she gave was sour,
And the babe who suck'd her shrivel'd like a mandrake;
And things besides, with a bigger horror in them,
Almost, I think, unlawful to be told!

MARGARET.

Then I must never hear them. But proceed,
And say what follow'd on the witch's curse.

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OLD STEWARD.

Nothing immediate; but some nine months after,
Young Stephen Woodvil suddenly fell sick,
And none could tell what ail'd him: for he lay,
And pin'd, and pin'd, that all his hair came off;
And he, that was full-flesh'd, became as thin
As a two-months' babe that hath been starved in the nursing;—
And sure, I think,
He bore his illness like a little child,
With such rare sweetness of dumb melancholy
He strove to clothe his agony in smiles,
Which he would force up in his poor, pale cheeks,
Like ill-tim'd guests that had no proper business there;—
And when they ask'd him his complaint, he laid
His hand upon his heart, to show the place
Where Satan came to him a nights, he said,
And prick'd him with a pin.—
And hereupon Sir Walter call'd to mind
The Beggar Witch that stood in the gateway,
And begg'd an alms—

MARGARET.

I do not love to credit Tales of magic.
Heav'n's music, which is order, seems unstrung;
And this brave world,
Creation's beauteous work, unbeautified,
Disorder'd, marr'd, where such strange things are acted.

This is the extract I brag'd of, as superior to that I sent to you from Marlow; perhaps you smile; but I should like your remarks on the above, as you are deeper witch-read than I.*

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

[Indorsed:]
Rob. Southey,
Mr. Cottle's, Bookseller, High Street, Bristol.

* The foregoing does not appear in the printed edition—perhaps Southey advised its exclusion; and one cannot help thinking, if so, that he judged rightly.

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*To the same*

D^r^ SOUTHEY,

You were the last person from whom we heard of Dyer, and if you know where to forward the news I now send to him, I shall be obliged to you to lose no time. D.'s sister-in-law, who lives in St. Dunstan's Court, wrote to him about three weeks ago, to the Hope Inn, Cambridge, to inform him that Squire Houlbert, or some such name, of Denmark Hill, has died, & left her husband a thousand pounds, and two or three hundred to Dyer. Her letter got no answer, and she does not know where to direct to him; so she came to me, who am equally in the dark. Her story is, that Dyer's immediately coming to town now, and signing some papers, will save him a considerable sum of money—how, I don't understand; but it is very right he should hear of this. She has left me barely time for the post; so I conclude with all Love, &c., to all at Keswick.

Dyer's brother, who, by his wife's account, has got 1000*l.* left him, is father of the little dirty girl, Dyer's niece and fac-totum.

In haste,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

If you send George this, cut off the last paragraph.

7 Nov., 1804.

D.'s laundress had a letter a few days since; but George never dates.

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[April 9, 1810.]

*To John Mathew Gutch.*

DEAR GUTCH,

I did not see your brother, who brought me Wither;* but he understood, he said, you were daily expecting to come to town: this has prevented my writing. The books have pleased me excessively: I should think you could not have made a better selection. I never saw *Philarete*† before—judge of my pleasure. I could not forbear scribbling certain critiques in pencil on the blank leaves. Shall I send them, or may I expect to see you in town? Some of them are remarks on the character of Wither and of his writings. Do you mean to have any thing of that kind? What I have said on *Philarete* is poor, but I think some of the rest not so bad: perhaps I have exceeded my commission in scrawling over the copies; but my delight therein must excuse me, and pencil-marks will rub out. Where is the Life? Write, for I am quite in the dark.

Yours, with many thanks,

C. LAMB.

Perhaps I could digest the few critiques prefixed to the Satires,‡ Shepherds Hunting,§ &c., into a short abstract of Wither's character and works, at the end of his Life. But, may be, you don't want any thing, and have said all you wish in the Life.

* Mr. Gutch's Bristol reprint of some of Wither's early productions. He had sent an interleaved copy of the proof-sheets to Lamb for his remarks. See further on this subject in the New Illustrations, *supra*.

† *Fair Virtue, the Mistresse of Philarete*, first printed in 1622. This work is mentioned as written in 1613, and was Wither's earliest performance, though not his earliest publication.

‡ The *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, first printed in 1613.

§ First printed in 1614.



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*Indifferent Wednesday*, 1821

*To Leigh Hunt.*

DEAR HUNT,

There was a sort of side-talk at Mr. Novello's about our spending *Good Friday* at Hampstead; but my sister has got so bad a cold, and we both want rest so much, that you shall excuse our putting off the visit some little time longer. Perhaps, after all, you know nothing of it.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[1825.]

*To the same.*

DEAR H.,

I am here almost in the eleventh week of the longest illness my sister ever had, and no symptoms of amendment. Some had begun, but relapsed with a change of nurse. If she ever gets well, you will like my house, and I shall be happy to show you Enfield country.*

As to my head, it is perfectly at your or any one's service; either Myers' or Hazlitt's,—which last (done fifteen or twenty years since) White, of the Accountant's Office, India House, has; he lives in Kentish Town—I forget where; but is to be found in Leadenhall daily. Take your choice. I should be proud to hang up as an alehouse-sign even; or, rather, I care not about my

* Mr. Hunt had recently returned from Italy. The object of this letter was to get a portrait of Lamb for his book called *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*, 1826. Lamb alludes to those which had been made of him by Myers and by Hazlitt, the latter in the costume of a Venetian senator (the "queer dress"). Both appear in Mr. Procter's book.

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head or any thing, but how we are to get well again, for I am tired out.

God bless you and yours from the worst calamity.

Yours truly,

C. L.

Kindest remembrances to Mrs. Hunt. H.'s is in a queer dress. M.'s would be preferable *ad populum*.

*To the Messrs. Ollier.*

DEAR SIR (whichever opens it),

I am going off to Birmingh^m^. I find my books, whatever faculty of selling they may have (I wish they had more for {*your* / *my*} sake), are admirably adapted for giving away. You have been bounteous. Six more, and I shall have satisfied all just claims. Am I taking too great a liberty in begging you to send 4 as follows, and reserve 2 for me when I come home? That will make 31. Thirty-one times 12 is 372 shillings—eighteen pounds twelve shillings!!! But here are my friends, to whom, if you *could* transmit them, as I shall be away a month, you will greatly

Oblige the obliged,

C. LAMB.

Mr. Ayrton, James Street, Buckingham Gate;
Mr. Alsager, Suffolk Street East, Southwark, by Horsemonger Lane;

And in one parcel,
directed to R. Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland:
One for R. S.;
And one for W^m^ Wordsworth, Esq.

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If you will be kind enough simply to write "From the Author" in all 4, you will still further, &c.

Either Longman or Murray is in the frequent habit of sending books to Southey, and will take charge of the parcel. It will be as well to write in at the beginning thus:

"R. Southey, Esq. From the Author."

"W. Wordsworth, Esq. From the Author."

Then, if I can find the remaining 2 left for me at Russell S$^{t}$ when I return, rather than encroach any more on the heap, I will engage to make no more new friends *ad infinitum*, yourselves being the last.

Yours truly,

C. L.

I think Southey will give us a lift in that damn'd *Quarterly*. I meditate an attack upon that Cobler Gifford, which shall appear immediately after any favorable mention which S. may make in the *Quarterly*. It can't, in decent *gratitude*, *appear before*.

18th June, 1818.

[On back:]

Messrs. Ollier, Library, Vere Street, Oxford Street.

[No date.]

DEAR O.,

We lamented your absence last night. The grouse were piquant: the bucks incomparable. You must come in to cold mutton and oysters some evening. Name your evening; though I have qualms at the distance. Do you never leave early? My head is very queerish, and indisposed for much company; but we will get Hood, that half Hogarth, to meet you. The

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scrap I send should come in AFTER the "Rising with the Lark."

Yours truly.

Colburn, I take it, pays postages.

[On back:]
Mr. Ollier, Mr. Colburn's, New Burlington Street.

[January 27, 1824.]

D^R^ OLLIER,

Many thanks from both of us for *Inesilla.* I wished myself younger, that I might have more enjoyed the terror of that desolate city, and the damned palace. I think it as fine as any thing in its way, and wish you joy of success, &c.

With better weather, I shall hope to see you at Islington.

Meantime, believe me,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Scribbled midst official flurry.

[On back:]
Mr. Ollier, 5 Maida Hill West, Paddington.

[No date.]

DEAR OLLIER,

I send you two more proverbs, which will be the last of this batch, unless I send you one more by the post on THURSDAY; none will come after that day; so do not leave any open room in that case. Hood sups with

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me to-night. Can you come and eat grouse? 'Tis not often I offer at delicacies.

Yours most kindly,

C. LAMB.

Tuesday.
Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row.
[On back:]
C. Ollier, Esq.

[Aug. 9, 1827.*]

*To Sir John Stoddart.*

DEAR KNIGHT—OLD ACQUAINTANCE,

'Tis with a violence to the *pure imagination* (*vide* the "Excursion" *passim*) that I can bring myself to believe I am writing to Dr. Stoddart once again, at Malta. But the deductions of severe reason warrant the proceeding. I write from Enfield, where we are seriously weighing the advantages of dulness over the over-excitement of too much company, but have not yet come to a conclusion. What is the news? for we see no paper here; perhaps you can send us an old one from Malta. Only, I heard a butcher in the market-place whisper something about a change of ministry. I don't know who's in or out, or care, only as it might affect *you*. For domestic doings, I have only to tell, with extreme regret, that poor Elisa Fenwick (that was)—Mrs. Rutherford—is dead; and that we have received a most heart-broken letter from her mother—left with four grandchildren, orphans of a living scoundrel lurking about the pothouses of Little Russell Street, London: they and she—God help 'em!—at New York. I have

* This letter is written on the same sheet of foolscap as Miss L.'s addressed to Lady S., which will be found at pp. 86-88.

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just received Godwin's third volume of the *Republic*, which only reaches to the commencement of the Protectorate. I think he means to spin it out to his life's thread. Have you seen Fearn's *Anti-Tooke?* I am no judge of such things—you are; but I think it very clever indeed. If I knew your bookseller, I'd order it for you at a venture: 'tis two octavos, Longman and Co. Or do you read now? Tell it not in the Admiralty Court, but my head aches *hesterno vino*. I can scarce pump up words, much less ideas, congruous to be sent so far. But your son must have this by to-night's post. . . . Manning is gone to Rome, Naples, &c., probably to touch at Sicily, Malta, Guernsey, &c.; but I don't know the map. Hazlitt is resident at Paris, whence he pours his lampoons in safety at his friends in England. He has his boy with him. I am teaching Emma Latin. By the time you can answer this, she will be qualified to instruct young ladies; she is a capital English reader: and S. T. C. acknowledges that part of a passage in Milton she read better than he, and part he read best, her part being the shorter. But, seriously, if Lady St—— (oblivious pen, that was about to write *Mrs.!*) could hear of such a young person wanted (she smatters of French, some Italian, music of course), we'd send our loves by her. My congratulations and assurances of old esteem.

C. L.*

* This is the last of the Lamb and Stoddart correspondence between 1803 and 1827. It supplies, with what I have been enabled to add to it from a variety of sources, a certain number of *lacunæ*, which will be of service to whoever, with Rembrandtish pen, shall portray hereafter the life of Lamb.

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[April 25, 1825.]

*To Vincent Novello.**

DEAR NOVELLO,

My sister's cold is as obstinate as an old Handelian, whom a modern amateur is trying to convert to Mozart-ism. As company must, and always does, injure it, Emma and I propose to come to you in the evening of to-morrow, *instead of meeting here.* An early bread-and-cheese supper at half-past eight will oblige us. Loves to the bearer of many children.

C. LAMB.

Tuesday. Colebrooke.

I sign with a black seal, that you may [begin] to think her cold has killed Mary; which will be an agreeable unsurprise when you read the note.

V. Novello, Esq., Green, Shacklewell.

[No date.]

*To the same.*

DEAR FUGUEIST,

or bear'st thou rather

CONTRAPUNTIST?—

We expect you four (as many as the table will hold without squeezing) at Mrs. Westwood's *Table d'Hôte* on Thursday. You will find the *White House* shut up, and us moved under the wing of the *Phœnix*,

* The Tom Pinch of *Elia*. This and the following letters were presented by Mr. Novello in 1840 to the British Museum, and are now preserved in *Add. MS.* 11,730. In the original MS. of the "Sonnet In the album of Mrs. Jane Towers," now also in the British Museum (*loco citato*), there is this note: "The foregoing sonnet was written out by the friend and happy *wife* of Charles Clarke, for her dear father—Vincent Novello; also one of Charles Clarke's admirers, and his Best Friend." It is there subscribed thus: "Charles Lamb, Enfield Chase, 19th Dec. 1827."

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which gives us friendly refuge. Beds for guests, marry, we have none, but cleanly accomodings at the *Crown and Horse-shoe.*

Yours harmonically,

C. L.

Vincentio (what, ho!) Novello, a Squire,
66 Great Queen Street, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

[No date.]

*To the same.*

DEAR N.,

Pray write immediately, to say, "The book has come safe." I am curious not so much for the autographs as for that bit of the hair-brush. I inclose a cinder, which belonged to *Shield* when he was poor, and lit his own fires. Any memorial of a great musical genius, I know, is acceptable; and Shield has his merits, though Clementi, in my opinion, is far above him in the *sostenuto.*

Mr. Westwood desires his compliments, and begs to present you with a nail that came out of Jomelli's coffin, who is buried at Naples.

REJECTED EPIGRAMS.

On English ground I calculated once
How many blockheads—taking dunce by dunce:
There are *four hundred* (if I don't forget)—
The readers of the *Literary Gazette.*

[No signature.]

[April 1827.]

*To his esteemed Friend, and excellent Musician, V. N., Esq.*

DEAR SIR,

I conjure you, in the name of all the Sylvan Deities, and of the Muses, whom you honour, and they reciprocally love and honour you, rescue this old and

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was trod into earth, that was nothing, on a sudden by damned arts refined into an exterminating angel, devouring the fruits of the earth, and their growers, in a mass of fire! What a new existence!—what a temptation, above Lucifer's! Would clod be any thing but a clod, if he could resist it? Why, here was a spectacle last night for a whole country!—a Bonfire visible to London, alarming her guilty towers, and shaking the Monument with an ague fit—all done by a little vial of phosphor in a Clown's fob! How he must grin, and shake his empty noddle in clouds, the Vulcanian Epicure! Can we ring the bells backward? Can we unlearn the arts that pretend to civilise, and then burn the world? There is a march of Science; but who shall beat the drums for its retreat? Who shall persuade the boor that phosphor will not ignite?

Seven goodly stacks of hay, with corn-barns proportionable, lie smoking ashes and chaff, which man and beast would sputter out and reject like those apples of Asphaltes and bitumen. The food for the inhabitants of earth will quickly disappear. Hot rolls may say: "Fuimus panes, fuit quartern-loaf, et ingens gloria Apple-pasty-orum." That the good old munching system may last thy time and mine, good un-incendiary George, is the devout prayer of thine*

To the last Crust,

CH. LAMB.

G. Dyer, Esq., Clifford's Inn.

* I am assured, that those only who were living fifty or sixty years ago, and who now half belong in spirit to the last generation, can form any adequate conception of the state of this country during the fifteen or twenty years which preceded the first Reform Bill. The agricul-

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*To Joseph Cottle.*

DEAR SIR,

It is so long since I have seen or heard from you, that I fear you will consider a request I have to make as impertinent. About three years since, when I was one day at Bristol, I made an effort to see you, but you were from home. The request I have to make is, that you would very much oblige me, if you have any small portrait of yourself, by allowing me to have it copied to accompany a selection of "Likenesses of Living Bards" which a most particular friend of mine is making.* If you have no objections, and could oblige me by transmitting such portrait to me at No. 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden, I will answer for taking the greatest care of it, and returning it the instant the copier has done with it. I hope you will pardon the liberty

From an old friend

And well-wisher,

CHARLES LAMB.

London, 5th Nov., 1829.

[Indorsed:]

Joseph Cottle, Esq., Bristol.

[1829.]

*To the same.*

DEAR SIR,

My friend whom you have obliged by the loan of your picture has had it very exactly copied (and a very spirited drawing it is, as every one thinks that has

tural discontent, the democratic agitation, the incendiarism, and, in short, the critical aspect of public affairs generally, were vividly present to Lamb's mind, doubtless, when he penned this letter to Dyer.

* Query, Mr. Procter's *Effigies Poeticæ*.



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of Emmeline; and I have understood that the force of her acting in it is rather in the expression of new-born sight, than of the previous want of it. The lines were really written upon her performance in the *Blind Boy*, and appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* some years back. I suppose our facetious friend thought they would serve again, like an old coat new turned.

Yours (and his, nevertheless),

C. LAMB.

[1827.]

*To the same.*

DEAR HONE,

By the verses in yesterday's *Table Book*, sign'd *, I judge you are going on better; but *I want to be resolv'd.* Alsop promised to call on you, and let me know, but has not. Pray attend to this;* and send me the number before the present (pages 225 to 256), which my newsman has neglect'd. Your book improves every week. I have written here a thing in 2 acts, and sent it to Cov^t Gard.†

Yours,

C. LAMB.

Sun^y, 2d Sept.

*For the "T. B."*

LINES FOR AN ALBUM.

Laura, too partial to her friends' enditing,
Requires from each a pattern of their *writing.*
A weightier trifle Laura might command;
For who to Laura would refuse his—*hand?*

C. L.

[Indorsed:]
Mr. Hone, 22 Belvidere Place, Southwark.

* An instalment of the "Extracts from the Garrick Plays." This note was the envelope to the parcel.

† *The Wife's Trial.* Lamb sent it to Charles Kemble on the 27th September, 1827; but it was not accepted: nor was it ever performed.

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[May, 1828.]

*To the same.*

DEAR H.,

Valter Vilson dines with us to-morrow. Vell! how I should like to see Hone!

C. LAMB.

Enfield, Wednesday.

[Indorsed:]
Mr. Hone, 22 Belvidere Place,
near the Obelisk, Southwark.

[May 21, 1830.]

*To the same.*

DEAR HONE,

I thought you would be pleased to see this letter.* Pray, if you have time, call on Novello, No. 66 Great Queen Street. I am anxious to learn whether he received his album, which I sent on Friday by our nine-o'clock morning stage. If not, beg him to inquire at the *Old Bell*, Holborn.

CHARLES LAMB.

Southey will see in the *Times*, all we proposed omitting is omitted.

[June 3, 1830.]

*To Mrs. Hazlitt.*

DEAR SARAH,

I named your thought† about William to his father, who exprest such horror and aversion to the idea of his singing in public, that I cannot meddle in it directly or indirectly. Ayrton is a kind fellow, and if you chuse to consult him by Letter, or otherwise, he

* A letter from Southey to Lamb, dated "Keswick, May 20, 1830," in which the former speaks very kindly about Hone.

† That her son should be placed with Mr. Braham, the singer, with a view to following the profession.

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[Edmonton, 1833.]

*To Mr. Tuff.*

D^r S^r,

I learn that Covent Garden, from its thin houses every night, is likely to be shut up after Saturd^y: so that no time is to be lost in using the orders.*

Yours,

C. LAMB.

[Indorsed:]
To Mr. Tuff.

October 4, 1827.

*To Barron Field, Esq.*

I am not in humour to return a fit reply to your pleasant letter. We are fairly housed at Enfield, and an angel shall not persuade me to wicked London again. We have now six Sabbath-days in a week for—*none!* The change has worked on my sister's mind to make her ill; and I must wait a tedious time before we can hope to enjoy this place in unison. Enjoy it, when she recovers, I know we shall. I see no shadow, but in her illness, for repenting the step! For Mathews—I know my own utter unfitness for such a task.† I am no hand at describing costumes, a great requisite in an account of mannered pictures. I have not the slightest acquaintance with pictorial language even. An imitator

* These were some box-orders which Lamb had received from Sheridan Knowles, who had then lately called on Lamb to read to him his play of *The Wife: a Tale of Mantua.* Mr. T. Tuff, to whom this little note was addressed, published *Historical, Topographical, and Statistical Notices of Enfield,* 1858, 8vo. *The Wife* was performed at Covent Garden in 1833; the author himself sustained the part of Julian St. Pierre.

† Lamb had been asked for a Catalogue of Mr. Field's gallery, the latter justly believing he would write charmingly upon the subject, as he afterwards proved he could.

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of me, or rather pretender to be *me*, in his "Rejected Articles," has made me minutely describe the dresses of the poissardes at Calais!—I could as soon resolve Euclid. I have no eye for forms and fashions. I substitute analysis, and get rid of the phenomenon by slurring in for it its impression. I am sure you must have observed this defect, or peculiarity, in my writings; else the delight would be incalculable in doing such a thing for Mathews, whom I greatly like—and Mrs. Mathews, whom I almost greatlier like. What a feast 'twould be to be sitting at the pictures painting 'em into words; but I could almost as soon make words into pictures. I speak this deliberately, and not out of modesty. I pretty well know what I can't do.

My sister's verses are homely, but just what they should be; I send them, not for the poetry, but the good sense and good will of them. I was beginning to transcribe; but Emma is sadly jealous of its getting into more hands, and I won't spoil it in her eyes by divulging it. Come to Enfield, and *read it*. As my poor cousin, the bookbinder, now with God, told me most sentimentally, that having purchased a picture of fish at a dead man's sale, his heart ached to see how the widow grieved to part with it, being her dear husband's favourite; and he almost apologised for his generosity by saying he could not help telling the widow she was "welcome to come and look at it"—*e. g.* at *his house*—"as often as she pleased." There was the germ of generosity in an uneducated mind. He had just *reading* enough from the backs of books for the "nec sinit esse feros;"* had he read inside, the same impulse would have led him to give back the two-guinea thing—with a request to see it, now and then, at *her*

* "Ingenuas didicisse artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."



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be happy to hear from you. That rogue Robinson detain'd your verses till I call'd for them. Don't intrust a bit of prose to the rogue, but believe me your obliged C. L. My sister sends her kind regards."

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### *To B. R. Haydon.**

[December, 1817.]

MY DEAR HAYDON,

I will come with pleasure to 22, Lisson Grove, North, at Rossi's, half way up, right hand side—if I can find it.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

20, Russel Court, Covent Garden East,
half way up, next the corner, left hand side.

### *In Tabulam egregii Pictoris B. Haydoni, in quâ Judæi ante Pedes Christi Palmas prosternentes mirâ Arte depinguntur.* [1821.]

QUID vult Iste Equitans? et quid velit ista virorum
Palmifera ingens turba, et vox tremebunda Hosannâ?
Hosannâ Christo semper semperque canamus.

* Printed in the *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, from his Autobiography and Journals*, edited and compiled by Tom Taylor (Lond., 1853), i. 384. In December, 1817, Wordsworth being in town, and Keats wishing to know him, Haydon made up a party to dinner, and among others invited Lamb, to whom he wrote, and told him the address was "22, Lisson Grove, North, at Rossi's, half way up, right hand corner." He received from Lamb the above characteristic reply.

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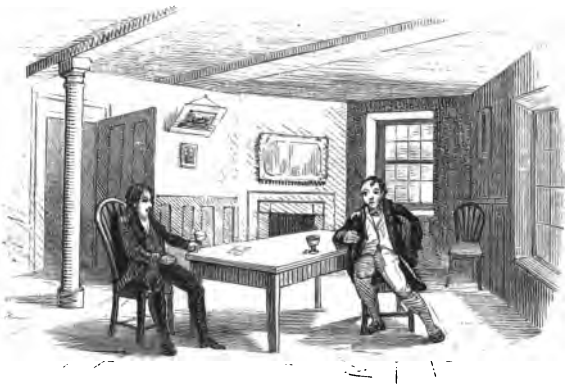

Interior of the *Bell* at Edmonton, from a sketch by J White. A friend from the country had called upon Lamb.

Exterior of the *Bell* at Edmonton, in Charles Lamb's time.

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Palma fuit Senior Pictor celeberrimus olim;
At palmam cedat, modò si foret ille superstes,
Palma, Haydone, tibi; tu palmas omnibus aufers.

"Palma negata macrum, donataque reddit opimum."
Si simul incipiat cum famâ increscere corpus,
Tu citò pinguesces, fies et, amicule, obesus.

Affectant lauros pictores atque poetæ;—
Sin laurum invideant (sed quis tibi?) laurigerentes,
Pro lauro palmâ viridanti tempora cinge.

CARLAGNULUS.*

## *To B. R. Haydon.*

[Ash Wednesday, 1827.]

DEAR RAFFAELE HAYDON,

Did the maid tell you I came to see your picture,† not on Sunday but the day before? I think the face and bearing of the Bucephalus-tamer very noble, his flesh too effeminate or painty. The skin of the female's back kneeling is much more carnous. I had small time to pick out praise or blame, for two lord-like bucks‡ came in, upon whose strictures my presence

* Tom Taylor's *Life of Haydon*, ii. 13. "Here in his journal," says Mr. Taylor [under date April 20, 1821], "Haydon has inserted some complimentary and playful Latin verses on the picture of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, sent to the *Examiner* under a signature in which the reader will recognise the name of Charles Lamb. I do not remember to have seen any other Latin poetry from that pleasant hand, and certainly this specimen is more monkish than classical."

† "Alexander," sent to the Royal Academy on April 4.

‡ Duke of Devonshire and Agar Ellis.—*Note by Haydon.*

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seemed to impose restraint: I plebeian'd off, therefore. I think I have hit on a subject for you, but can't swear it was never executed,—I never heard of its being,—"Chaucer beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street." Think of the old dresses, houses, &c. "It seemeth that both these learned men (Gower and Chaucer) were of the Inner Temple; for not many years since Master Buckley did see a record in the same house where Geoffry Chaucer was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street."—*Chaucer's Life by T. Speght*, prefixed to the black-letter folio of Chaucer, 1598.

Yours in haste (salt fish waiting),

C. LAMB.*

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A LATE ROYAL ACADEMICIAN.†

WHAT Apelles was to the Grecian *Alexander*, the same to the *Russian* was the late G[eorge] D[awe]. None but Apelles might attempt the lineaments of the world's conqueror; none but our Academician could have done justice to the lines of the Czar, and his courtiers. There they hang, the labour of ten plodding years, in an endless gallery, erected for the nonce, in the heart of Imperial Petersburgh—eternal monuments of barbarian taste submitting to half-civilised cunning—four hundred fierce Half-lengths, all male, and all military; like the pit in a French theatre, or the characters in Timon as it was last acted, with never a woman among them. Chaste sitters to Vandyke, models of grace and womanhood,

* Taylor's *Life of Haydon*, ii. 164, 165.

† *Peter's Net*, No. 1 (*Englishman's Magazine*, ii. 25).

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and thou Dame Venetia Digby, fairest among thy fair compeers at Windsor, hide your pale cheeks, and cool English beauties, before this suffocating horde of Scythian riflers, this male chaos. Your cold oaken frames shall wane before the gorgeous gildings,

"With Tartar faces thronged, and horrent uniforms."

One emperor contended for the monopoly of the *ancient;* two were competitors at once for the pencil of the *modern Apelles.* The Russian carried it against the Haytian by a single length. And if fate, as it was at one time nearly arranged, had wafted D. to the shores of Hayti—with the same complacency in his art with which he persisted in daubing in, day after day, his frozen Muscovites, he would have sate down for life to smutch in upon canvas the faces of blubber-lipped sultanas, or the whole male retinue of the dingy court of Christophe. For in truth a choice of subjects was the least of D.'s care. A Goddess from Cnidus, or from the Caffre coast, was equal to him; Lot, or Lot's wife; the charming widow H., or her late husband.

My acquaintance with D. was in the outset of his art, when the graving tools, rather than the pencil, administered to his humble wants. Those implements, as is well known, are not the most favourable in the cultivation of that virtue which is esteemed next to godliness. He might "wash his hands in innocency," and so metaphorically "approach an altar," but his material puds were any thing but fit to be carried to church. By an ingrained economy in soap,—if it was not for pictorial effect rather,—he would wash (on Sunday) the inner oval, or portrait, as it may be termed, of his countenance, leaving the unwashed temples to form a natural black frame round a picture in which a dead white was a predominant colour. This,

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with the addition of green spectacles, made necessary by the impairment which his graving labours by day and night (for he was ordinarily at them for sixteen hours out of the twenty-four) had brought upon his visual faculties, gave him a singular appearance when he took the air abroad; insomuch that I have seen a crowd of young men and boys following him along Oxford Street with admiration; not without shouts; even as the youth of Rome, we read in Vasari, followed the steps of Raphael with acclamations for his genius, and for his beauty, when he proceeded from his workshop to chat with Cardinals and Popes at the Vatican.

The family of D. was not at this time in affluent circumstances. His father, a clever artist, had outlived the style of art in which he excelled most of his contemporaries. He, with the father of the celebrated Morland, worked for the shop of Carrington and Bowles, which exists still for the poorer sort of caricatures, on the North side of St. Paul's Church Yard. They did clever things in colours. At an inn in Reading a screen is still preserved, full of their labours: but the separate portions of either artist are now undistinguishable. I remember A Mother teaching her Child to read (B. Barton has a copy of it); A Laundress washing; A young Quaker, a beautiful subject. But the flower of their forgotten productions hangs still at a public house on the left hand, as thou arrivest, Reader, from the now Highgate archway, at the foot of the descent where Crouch End begins, on thy road to green Hornsey. Turn in, and look at it, for the sight is well worth a cup of excusatory cyder. In the parlour to the right you will find it—an antiquated subject—a Damsel sitting at her breakfast table in a gown of the flowered chintz of our grandmothers, with a tea service before her of the *same*

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*pattern.* The effect is most delicate. Why have these harmonies—these *agrémens*—no place in the works of modern art?

With such niceties in his calling D. did not much trouble his head, but after an ineffectual experiment to nourish his eyesight with his occupation, boldly quitted it, and dashed into the beaten road of commonplace portraiture in oil. The Hopners, and the Lawrences, were his Vandykes and his Velasquezes; and if he could make any thing like them, he insured himself immortality. With such guides he struggled on through laborious nights and days, till he reached the eminence he aimed at—of mediocrity. Having gained that summit, he sat down contented. If the features were but cognoscible, no matter whether the flesh resembled flesh or oil-skin. For the thousand tints—the grains—which in the life diversify the nose, the chin, the cheek—which a Reynolds can but coarsely counterfeit—he cared nothing at all about them. He left such scrupulosities to opticians and anatomists. If the features were but there, the character of course could not be far off. A lucky hit which he made in painting the *dress* of a very dressy lady—Mrs. W—e—, whose handsome countenance also, and tall elegance of shape, were too palpable entirely to escape under any masque of oil with which even D. could overlay them—brought to him at once an influx of sitters, which almost rivalled the importunate calls upon Sir Thomas. A portrait he *did* soon after of the Princess Charlotte clenched his fame. He proceeded Academician. At that memorable conjuncture of time, it pleased the Allied Sovereigns to visit England.

I called upon D. to congratulate him upon a crisis so doubly eventful. His pleasant housekeeper seemed embarrassed; owned that her master was alone. But could he be spoken with? With some importunity I

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prevailed upon her to usher me up into his painting-room. It was in Newman Street. At his easel stood D. with an immense spread of canvas before him, and by his side—live Goose. I inquired into this extraordinary combination. Under the rose he informed me that he had undertaken to paint a transparency for Vauxhall, against an expected visit of the Allied Sovereigns to that place. I smiled at an engagement so derogatory to his new-born honours; but a contempt of small gains was never one of D.'s foibles. My eyes beheld crude forms of warriors, kings, rising under his brush upon this interminable stretch of cloth. The Wolga, the Don, and the Nieper, were there, or their representative River-Gods: and Father Thames clubbed urns with the Vistula. Glory, with her dazzling Eagle, was not absent, nor Fame, nor Victory. The shade of Rubens might have evoked the mighty allegories. But what was the Goose? He was evidently *sitting* for a something.

D. at last informed me, that having fixed upon a group of rivers, he could not introduce the Royal Thames without his *swans*. That he had inquired the price of a live swan, and it being more than he was prepared to give for it, he had bargained with the poulterer for the *next thing to it;* adding significantly, that it would do to roast, after it had served its turn to paint swans by. *Reader, this is a true story.*

So entirely devoid of imagination, or any feeling for his high art, was this *Painter*, that, for the few historical pictures he attempted, any sitter might sit for any character. He took once for a subject *The Infant Hercules*. Did he chuse for a model some robust antique? No. He did not even pilfer from Sir Joshua, who was nearer to his own sins. But from a *show* he hired to sit to him a child in years indeed

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(though no Infant), but in fact a precocious *Man*, a human portent, that was disgustingly exhibiting at that period, a thing to be strangled. From this he formed his Infant Hercules. In a scriptural flight he next attempted a Sampson in the lap of Dalilah. A Dalilah of some sort was procurable for love or money, but who should stand for the Jewish Hercules? He hired a tolerably stout porter, with a thickish head of hair, curling in yellowish locks, but lithe—much like a wig. And these were the robust strengths of Sampson.

I once was witness to a *family scene* in his painting closet, which I had entered rather abruptly, and but for his encouragement, should as hastily have retreated. He stood with displeased looks eyeing a female relative —whom I had known under happier auspices—that was kneeling at his feet with a baby in her arms, with her eyes uplifted and suppliant. Though I could have previously sworn to the virtue of Miss ——, yet casual slips have been known. There are such things as families disgraced, where least you would have expected it. The *child might be*—I had heard of no wedding—I was the last person to pry into family secrets, when D. relieved my uneasy cogitations by explaining, that the innocent, good-humoured creature before me (such as she ever was, and is now that she is married) with a baby borrowed from the public house, was acting Andromache to his Ulysses, for the purpose of transferring upon canvas a tender situation from the Thebais of Seneca.

On a subsequent occasion I knocked at D.'s door: I had chanced to have been in a dreamy humour previously. I am not one that often poetises, but I had been musing—coxcombically enough—in the heart of Newman Street, Oxford Road, upon Pindus, and the Avinan Maids. The Lover of Daphne was in my mind —when, answering to my summons, the door opened,

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and there stood before me, laurel-crowned, the God himself, unshorn Apollo. I was beginning to mutter apologies to the Celestial Presence—when on the thumb of the right hand of the Delian (his left held the lamp) I spied a pallet, such as painters carry, which at once reconciled me to the whimsical transformation of my old acquaintance—with his own face, certainly any other than Grecianesque—into a temporary image of the oracle-giver of Delphos. To have impersonated the Ithacan was little;—he had been just sitting for a God. —It would be no incurious enquiry to ascertain what the *minimum* of the faculty of imagination, ever supposed essential to painters along with poets, is, that, in these days of complaints of want of patronage towards the fine arts, suffices to dub a man R——l A——n.

Not only had D. no imagination to guide him in the treatment of such subjects, but he had no relish for high art in the productions of the great masters. He turned away from them, as from something foreign and irrelative to him, and to his calling. He knew he had neither part nor portion in them. Cozen him into the Stafford or the Angerstein Gallery, he involuntarily turned away from the Bath of Diana—the Four Ages of Guercino—the Lazarus of Piombo—to some petty piece of *modern* art, that had been inconsistently thrust into the collection through favour. On that he would dwell and pore, blind as the dead to the delicacies that surrounded him. There he might learn something. There he might pilfer a little. There was no grappling with Titian or Angelo.

The narrowness of his domestic habits to the very last was the consequence of his hard bringing-up, and unexpected emergence into opulence. While rolling up to the ears in Russian rubles, a penny was still in his eyes the same important thing, which it had with some

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reason seemed to be, when a few shillings were his daily earnings. When he visited England a short time before his death, he reminded an artist of a commission, which he had executed for him in Russia, the package of which was "still unpaid." At this time he was not unreasonably supposed to have realised a sum little short of half a million sterling. What became of it, was never known; what gulf, or what Arctic *vorago*, sucked it in, his acquaintance in those parts have better means of guessing, than his countrymen. It is certain that few of the latter were any thing the better for it.

It was before he expatriated himself, but subsequently to his acquisition of pictorial honours in this country, that he brought home two of his brother Academicians to dine with him. He had given an order extraordinary to his housekeeper. He trusted, as he always did, to her providing. She was a shrewd lass, and knew, as we say, a bit of her master's mind.

It had happened that on the day before, D., passing Clare Market, by one of those open shambles, where tripe and cow-heel are exposed for sale, his eye was arrested by the sight of some tempting flesh *rolled up*. It is a part of the intestines of some animal, which my olfactory sensibilities never permitted me to stay long enough to enquire the name of. He marked the curious involutions of the unacquainted luxury: the harmony of its colours—a *sable vert*—pleased his eye; and warmed with the prospect of a new flavour, for a few farthings, he bore it off in triumph to his housekeeper. It so happened that his day's dinner was provided, so the cooking of the novelty was for that time necessarily suspended.

Next day came. The hour of dinner approached. His visitors, with no very romantic anticipations, expected a plain meal at least; they were prepared for no



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new dainties; when to the astonishment of them, and almost of D. himself, the purchase of the preceding day was served up piping hot—the cook declaring that she did not know well what it was, for "her master always marketed." His guests were not so happy in their ignorance. They kept dogs.

I will do D. the justice to say, that on such occasions he took what happened in the best humour possible. He had no *false modesty*—though I have generally observed, that persons who are quite deficient in that *mauvaise honte*, are seldom overstocked with the quality itself, of which it is the counterfeit.

By what arts, with *his* pretensions, D. contrived to wriggle himself into a seat in the Royal Academy, I am not acquainted enough with the intrigues of that body (more involved than those of an Italian conclave) to pronounce. It is certain that neither for love to him, nor out of any respect to his talents, did they elect him. Individually he was obnoxious to them all. I have heard that, in his passion for attaining this object, he went so far as to go down on his knees to some of the members, whom he thought most favourable, and beg their suffrage with many tears.

But *death*, which extends the measure of a man's stature to appearance, and *wealth*, which men worship in life and death, which makes giants of pigmies, and embalms insignificance; called around the exequies of this pigmy Painter the rank, the riches, the fashion of the world. By Academic hands his pall was borne; by the carriages of the nobles of the land, and of ambassadors from foreign powers, his bier was followed; and St. Paul's (O worthy casket for the shrine of such a Zeuxis) now holds—ALL THAT WAS MORTAL OF G. D.

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# APPENDIX.

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# APPENDIX.

## *Catalogue of Charles Lamb's Library, for Sale by Bartlett and Welford, Booksellers and Importers, 7 Astor House, New York.*

"And you, my midnight darlings, my folios, must I part with the intense delight of having you (huge armfuls) in my embrace? must knowledge come to me, if it come at all, by some awkward experiment of intuition, and no longer by this familiar process of reading?"—*Elia.*

DURING the long illness of Miss Lamb, the collection of books, that had formed the solace and delight of her brother's life, met with neglect and partial dispersion among his friends: at her death, the following volumes were selected from the mass as worthy of preservation, from containing notes, &c. by the late possessor, and the remainder destroyed; so that no other such opportunity *can* offer to the admirers of C. Lamb for securing a memento of their favourite author. The notes, remarks, &c. referred to and quoted in inverted commas, in the following list, are warranted to be *all* in the autograph of Lamb (except when otherwise mentioned); and

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it will be seen that many of his most favourite works are there. No attempt has been made to reclothe his "shivering folios;" they are precisely in the state in which he possessed and left them.

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1. *Auli Gellii Noctes Atticæ.* 24mo. Amst., Elz., 1651.

"This book was bought at Mr. J. Horne Tooke's sale, and the marginal references are from his pen."—*C. L.'s MS. Note.*

2. *Art of Living in London (The): a Poem.* 12mo. London, 1805.

With long MS. note on the author, Mr. Wm. Cooke. "Goldsmith gave the title to the *Art*, and revised it all from Jacky Taylor;" and other notes and remarks in MS.

3. *Bourne (V.), Poemata, Latine, partim reddita, partim scripta.* 12mo. London, 1750.

With several Latin poetical extracts, &c. on the fly-leaves, and an original Latin poem of six lines, "Suum Cuique," signed C. L., printed in Talfourd's Life. "The only Latin verse I have made for forty years.

"From thence I turned to V. Bourne: what a sweet, unpretending, pretty-mannered, matterful creature! Bless him! Latin wasn't good enough for him. Why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in?"—*Letter to Southey*, 1815.

4. *Burney (James): Essay on the Game of Whist.* 12mo. London, 1821.

"Martin Charles Burney, from the author" (the M. B. of *Elia*).

5. *Bacon's (Lord) Works.* Small 4to. London, 1629.

"This book contains *Advancement of Learning* (1st edition, 1629), and *Essays* by Lord Bacon."—*MS. note.*

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6. *Cities Great Concern (The): a Question of Honor and Arms, whether Apprentiship extinguisheth Gentry.* 18mo. London, 1674.

"This treatise was written by John Philpot, Somerset Herald, died 1645."—See MS. copy of title-page on fly-leaf.

7. *Cleaveland (J.): Poems, Orations, and Epistles, and others of his Genuine, Incomparable Pieces.* 12mo. London, 1662.

MS. notice of the author, from Fuller's *Worthies.*

8. *Cleaveland (J.): Poems, Orations, and Epistles, and others of his Genuine, Incomparable Pieces.* 12mo. London, 1668.

MS. notes, and additional poems.

9. *Chaucer (Jeffrey): The Works of our Ancient and Learned English Poet, and Lidgate's Story of Thebes.* Speght's edition, folio. London, 1598. Black-letter, good sound copy.

MS. notes and extracts on the fly-leaves. "I have not a black-letter book amongst mine, old Chaucer excepted."—*Letter to Ainsworth,* 1823.

10. *Cowley (A.), The Works of, complete.* Folio. London, 1693.

Three folio pages of additions and extracts, marginal corrections in MS.

11. *Dunciad (The), Variorum.* 8vo. London, 1729.

"This book contains the *Dunciad* as at first written, with Theobald for hero, and the *Art of Politics,* in imitation of Hor. *Art. Poet.*"

12. *Dennis (Mr.), Original Letters, Familiar, Moral, and Critical, by.* 8vo. London, 1726.

MS. notes and additions.

13. *Drayton (Michael), The Works of: containing Poly-Olbion, The Barons' Wars, England's Heroical Epistles, &c.* 1 vol. large folio. London, 1748.

The blank leaves are literally crowded with illustrative

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extracts from Elizabethan authors, additional poems, &c., including the whole of Skelton's *Philip Sparrow*, in C. Lamb's "most clerkly" handwriting.

14. *Euripidis Tragœdiæ, interp. Lat.* 8vo. Oxonii, 1821.
"C. and M. Lamb, from H. F. Cary," on fly-leaf; and a few marginal corrections of the text, in C. Lamb's hand.

15. *Edwards* (*Jonathan*). 8vo.
"Edwards on *Free Will*, and Priestley on *Necessity*, are bound together in this volume."—*MS. note.*
"Priestley, whom I sin in almost adoring."—*Letter to Coleridge*, 1797.

16. *Fulke Greville* (*Lord Brooke*), *Certain Learned and Elegant Works of, written in his Youth; and Familiar Exercise with Sir Philip Sidney, containing Treatise of Humane Learning, of Warres, Tragedie of Alaham, &c. &c.* Small folio. London, 1633.
Long extracts relative to Lord Brooke, marginal corrections, and note on the suppression of one of his works.
"Whether we look into his plays or his most passionate love-poems, we find all frozen and made rigid with intellect."—*Dramatic Specimens.*

17. *Guardian* (*The*). Vol. I., 24mo, London, 1750; Vol. II., 12mo, London, 1734.
In Vol. I. are the autographs, "John Lamb, 1756," "Charles Lamb," in a child's and an older hand. This set, of which the first volume had belonged to his father, and the second was picked up at some stall, was Chas. Lamb's only copy of *The Guardian.*

18. *Hudibras, in Three Parts, with Annotations.* 12mo. London, 1726.
On the title, "Mr. John Lamb," and various marginal corrections, &c., in his son's hand.

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19. *Hymens Præludia; or, Loves Masterpiece, that so much admired Romance of Cleopatra. Translated by R. Loveday.* Folio. London, 1698.

MS. note on Title.

20. *Jonson's (Ben) Works.* Complete in 1 vol. folio. London, 1692.

The blank leaves, margins, &c., are filled with extracts from the old dramatists and early English writers, with additional poems, corrections of the text, &c., in Charles Lamb's early handwriting, forming a most curious and valuable memento of his favourite studies.

21. *Lucan's Pharsalia; or, the Civil Wars of Rome. Englished by Thomas May. With Continuation to the Death of Julius Cæsar.* 12mo. London, 1635.

Bears marks of careful reading, with the favourite passages and epithets underscored.

22. *More (Dr. Henry): Philosophical Poems, Platonic Song of the Soul, &c.* 12mo. Cambridge, 1647.

Fine copy, gilt edges, with additional poems, and a few MS. notes and corrections.

23. *More (Dr. Henry), Collection of the Philosophical Writings of.* Folio. London, 1712.

On fly-leaf, "Mr. Lamb, 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden, corner of Bow Street." "In the autumn of this year (1817) he and his sister removed to lodgings in Russell Street, Covent Garden, delightfully situate between the two great theatres."—*Talfourd's Life.* See Letter to Miss Wordsworth, Nov. 21, 1817, in ditto.

24. *More (Dr. Henry): Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness.* Folio. London, 1660.

"Lamb, Colebrook Cottage, end of Colebrook Terrace, left hand," apparently a direction for the delivery of the book, written inside.

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25. *Minor Poets, The Works of.* Vol. I., 12mo. London, 1749.

"Wentworth, Lord Roscommon, Charles Earl of Dorset, Lord Halifax, Sir Samuel Garth."—*MS. note on fly-leaf.*

26. *Miscellanies.* In 1 vol. 8vo, containing five Tracts.

"This volume contains *Antonio*, a Tragedy, by Wm. Godwin; *Remorse*, a Tragedy, by S. T. C.; *Antiquity*, a Farce, by B(arron) Field;" &c. MS. List of Contents. Outside the cover is written, "The remainder of Christ's Hospital: return the volume when done with. C. L. for L. Hunt, Esq."

27. *Miscellany Letters* (*Collection of*), *selected out of Mist's Weekly Journal.* 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1722.

On the cover of Vol. I. is a curious list of Lamb's friends and acquaintances, with their addresses, as, "Godwin, 44 Gower Place; Fenwick" (the Bigod of *Elia*), "Bond Street, New York, and Niagara, Upper Canada; Talfourd, Moxon," &c.

28. *Newcastle* (*Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of*), *Works.* 1 vol. folio. London, 1664.

"This volume contains, besides *Philosophical Letters, The Life of the Duke of Newcastle*, by the Duchess."—*MS. note.* "Such a book, for instance, as *The Life of the Duke of Newcastle*, by his Duchess,—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honour and keep safe such a jewel."—*Elia.*

29. *Newcastle* (*Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of*), *The World's Olio, written by the Thrice-noble and most excellent Princess, the Duchess of Newcastle.* Folio. London, 1671.

Bears marks of careful reading, with many marginal MS. notes, comments, &c.

30. *Newcastle* (*Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of*), *Nature's Picture, drawn by Fancies Pencil; her Comical Tales, in Verse; ditto, ditto, in Prose.* Folio. London, 1656.

MS. marginal notes and corrections.

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31. *Osborne (Francis), The Works of: Memoirs of Queen Elizabeth and King James, &c.* 8vo. London, 1689.
A few MS. references, &c.

32. *Old Plays: a Collection of rare old quarto Plays, original editions, by Nat. Lee, Shadwell, Settle, Mrs. Behn, Tom Durfey, Crowne, &c.* 11 in number, bound in 1 vol. 4to.
MS. List of Contents.

33. *Old Plays: a Collection of rare old quarto Plays, original editions, by Wycherley, Dryden, Shadwell, &c.; with Dryden's Essay on Dramatic Poetry.* 12 Plays, in 1 vol. 4to.
MS. List of Contents.

34. *Old Plays, by Vanbrugh, Farquhar, Settle, &c.; and curious Tracts by A. Marvell, C. Cotton, Motteux, &c.* 1 vol. 4to.
15 Tracts, with MS. List of Contents.

35. *Old Plays, by the Duchess of Marley, John Webster (with numerous marginal corrections—no doubt the copy used for the Dramatic Specimens); The Rehearsal of the Duke of Buckingham; and others by Etheredge, Otway, Wycherley, &c.* 1 vol. 4to.
MS. Contents.

36. *Poetical Tracts, original 4to editions; Mason's English Garden, 1772; View of Covent-Garden Theatre, curious Plate; The Theatres, ditto, 1772.* 1 vol. 4to.
MS. List of Contents: 7 Tracts.

37. *Poetical Tracts,* 1 vol. 8vo; *Poems by Charles Lloyd, 1795; Lines on the Fast by ditto, 1799, with an inscription*—"Charles Lloyd to Charles;" *Coleridge's France, &c.; Fears in Solitude, &c.; Wordsworth's Descriptive Sketches.* All original editions.
Full of corrections and variations of the text, MS. Contents, &c., by C. L.

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38. *Prior (M.), Miscellaneous Works of.* 8vo. London, 1740.

With numerous MS. additions, extracts, &c.

39. *Plays.* 1 vol. 8vo.

"This book contains *Wallenstein*, a drama, in two parts, translated by S. T. Coleridge, from Schiller; Plays by Joanna Baillie."—*MS. notes.*

40. *Philips (Mrs. Katharine, the Matchless Orinda), The Poems of.* Folio. London, 1678.

With a MS. critical note and emendations, &c.

41. *Relation of the Fearfull Estate of Francis Spira.* 12mo.

"This book was written by one Springer, a lawyer."—*MS. note.*

42. *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ: a Collection of Lives, Letters, Poems, and Characters, by Sir Henry Wotton, Dr. Donne, &c.; edited by Izaack Walton.* Best edition. 8vo. London, 1672.

With additional poems by Wotton, and a few notes in MS.

43. *Richardson (John): Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's Paradise Lost.* 8vo. London, 1734.

With MS. notes and extracts on the fly-leaves.

44. *A Review of the Text of the Twelve Books of Milton's Paradise Lost, in which Dr. Bentley's Emendations are considered.* 8vo. London, 1733.

"By Dr. Zachary Pearce, Bishop of Rochester."—*MS. note.*

45. *Shakespeare's Poems: Venus and Adonis, Tarquin and Lucrece, &c.* 12mo. London, 1714.

With several pages of poetical extracts, poems ascribed to Shakespeare, &c.; and frequent marginal corrections of the text, references, &c., as *The Amorous Epistle of Helen to Paris.* "By Thomas Heywood (not Sh.)," &c.

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46. *Spectator* (*The*), Vol. 9th and last. 4th edition, rare. 12mo. London, 1724.

"By Wm. Bond, associate with Aaron Hill in *The Plain Dealer*."—*MS. note.*

47. *Swift's Works*, Vol. V. 12mo. Dublin, 1759.

Six pages of poetical extracts on the fly-leaves, margin, &c.

48. *Suckling* (*Sir John*), *Fragmenta Aurea; a Collection of the incomparable Pieces of.* 8vo. London, 1646.

MS. extracts from Aubrey's *Lives*, notes, &c.

49. *Sewell* (*Wm.*): *The History of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers.* Folio. London, 1722.

MS. reference, &c., on fly-leaf. "Reader, if you are not acquainted with it, I would recommend to you, above all church narratives, to read Sewell's *History of the Quakers*."—*Elia.*

50. *Tryon* (*Thos.*): *Of the Knowledge of a Man's Self.* 8vo.

Curious MS. Account of the author of this singular work.

51. *Tale of a Tub* (*The*), *and Battle of the Books.* 8vo. London, 1710.

With a few MS. marginal notes.

52. *Tracts, Miscellaneous*, bound in 1 vol. 8vo: *The Spleen, by Mr. Matthew Green, 1737; Dissertation on the Inlets to Human Knowledge, 1739; The Uncertainty of Physic, 1739; &c.*

MS. List of Contents.

53. *Tracts, Miscellaneous, 11 curious Tracts: The Clouds of Aristophanes, translated by J. White; and 10 others. With a MS. List of Contents.* 1 vol. 8vo.

54. *Tracts, Miscellaneous*, 1 thick volume, 12mo: *Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures, and Poetical and Historical Inventions, by William Blake, 1809; Lord Rochester's*

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*Poems; Lady Winchelsea's Poems; C. Lamb's Confessions of a Drunkard, with Corrections, &c.; Southey's Wat Tyler; &c.*

12 Tracts, with MS. List of Contents.

55. *Waller (Mr.): The Second Part of his Poems, containing his alterations of The Maid's Tragedy, &c.* 8vo. London, 1690.

Additional Poems and Notes in MS.

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## BOOKS WITH NOTES BY S. T. COLERIDGE.

"Reader, lend thy books, but let it be to such a one as S. T. C.: he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury, enriched with annotations tripling their value."—*Elia.*

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56. *Buncle (John), The Life of. By Thomas Amory.* 8vo. London.

With very curious and characteristic introductory critical note by Coleridge, and marginal corrections throughout.

57. *Donne (John), Dean of St. Paul's, Poems by.* 12mo. London, 1669.

The blank leaves and margins are full of curious and valuable critical and illustrative notes, written while reading the poems, most characteristic of Coleridge; including an original Epigrammatic Poem by him, &c. &c. At the end is, "I shall die soon, my dear Charles Lamb, and then you will not be vexed that I have bescribbled your book.—S. T. C., 2d May, 1811."*

58. *God's Revenge against the crying and execrable Sin of Murder. In 30 several Tragical Histories. By John Reynolds.* Folio. London, 1651. With cuts.

With very long and curious critical and metaphysical

* See the essay entitled "The Two Races of Men," in *Elia*, 1823.

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notes by Coleridge, characterising the book of "honest Murthero-Maniacal John Reynolds." In another he says, "Oh, what a beautiful *concordia discordantium* is an unthinking good-hearted man's soul!"

59. *History (The) of Philip de Commines, Knight, Lord of Argentan. Translated.* Folio. London, 1674.

With an interesting MS. note by Charles Lamb, at the commencement; and "Memorabilia" by Coleridge, at the end, on the free towns and republics of the Middle Ages, &c.

60. *Petvin (Rev. John): Letters concerning the Mind; with a Sketch of Universal Arithmetic, &c.* 8vo. London, 1750.

Full of the most curious philosophic and abstruse notes and remarks by Coleridge, written in pencil during his perusal of the book; and dated Oxford, October 19, 1820.

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N.B.—A few of the Notes, &c., by Coleridge, mentioned above, are *entirely unpublished*, and were unknown to the Editors of his Literary Remains, to which they would form an important addition. Many of them, however (those on Dawe, Reynolds, &c.), appear in *Notes Theological, &c.*, 1853.

THE END.

GEORGE LEVEY, PRINTER, WEST HARDING STREET.

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# NOTES OF CHARLES LAMB

TO

# THOMAS ALLSOP.

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# NOTES OF CHARLES LAMB

TO

# THOMAS ALLSOP.

BY GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.*

AS I look over this collection of Charles Lamb's unpublished notes to his friend Thomas Allsop—as I hold them in my hand, and remark the fair, smooth, legible, half-prim, clerkly writing, the heavy mercantile paper of the old India House, with the edges rough where he tore them into little note-shapes, and the gray-and-

* Now first reprinted from Harper's *New York Magazine*. They have never appeared in any English collection. I have assumed the liberty of dealing rather freely with the commentary of Mr. Curtis, which was not very relevant in all cases, and at best was a mere series of extracts from Talfourd's volumes. I have retained only what seemed necessary to form an illustrative letterpress accompaniment to these Notes.

Thomas Allsop, whose friendship with Lamb thus appears during several years to have been close and uninterrupted, was a gentleman of whose origin I am as ignorant as of that of his acquaintance with the author of *Elia*. Mr. Allsop is chiefly known through his *Life and Letters of S. T. Coleridge*, 1837. I am informed that at one period of his life he was on the Stock Exchange; but certainly he kept for some time a small lace-shop in Regent Street, between Oxford Circus and Great Castle Street. During an excursion to America, he is supposed to have sold the correspondence here printed to Mr. Harper, of the *New York Magazine*.

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yellowish hue which has stolen over them with time—I place my hand where his hand must have rested; I think of that genial genius, that true and charitable heart, that long life of silent heroism, and I find how truly Talfourd says, in the preface to the *Final Memorials*, that "there is, indeed, scarcely a note (a notelet, as he used to call his very little letters) Lamb ever wrote, which has not some tinge of that quaint sweetness—some hint of that peculiar union of kindness and whim—which distinguish him from all other poets and humorists." And, therefore, with very few and slight exceptions, Talfourd printed every thing that came into his possession.

I feel disposed to do likewise with these notes, because the lovers of Charles Lamb love entirely, and wish nobody to select or discriminate for them, but would have every word that he said or wrote in all its completeness. For none of our authors, not even Shakespeare, is more a passion with all who feel his genius, than Charles Lamb; while, perhaps, no English author of equal rank is so entirely out of the sympathy of those who are not in his key. Thus, in that extraordinary diary of the dinings-out of a fashionable bard of Erin, which Lord John Russell has edited for a hungry posterity in eight volumes, we read:

"*April 4th*, 1823.—Dined at Monkhouse's (a gentleman I had never seen before), on Wordsworth's invitation, who lives there whenever he comes to town. A singular party—Coleridge, Rogers, Wordsworth and wife, Charles Lamb (the hero at present of the *London Magazine*) and his sister (the poor woman who went mad with him in the *diligence*, on the way to Paris), and a Mr. Robinson, one of the *minora sidera* of this constellation of the Lakes; the host himself a Mecenas of the old school, contributing nothing but good dinners

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and silence. Charles Lamb—a clever fellow, certainly; but full of villanous and abortive puns, which he miscarries of every minute. Some excellent things, however, have come from him; and his friend Robinson mentioned to me not a bad one. On Robinson's receiving his first brief, he called upon Lamb to tell him of it. I suppose, said Lamb, you addressed that line of Milton to it,—Thou first, best cause, least understood!" —Moore's *Diary*, iv. 50.

[The notes] are, in themselves, mostly unimportant; but they fit in well, with their details of daily life, among the letters which Talfourd has published. The manuscript, the folding, the general character of all of them, fully illustrate the truth of what Lamb often says of his letters and notes.

Talfourd says of Lamb, in the year 1824 (i. 307):

"Lamb himself, at this time, wrote a singularly neat hand, having greatly improved in the India House; where he also learned to flourish—a facility he took a pride in, and sometimes indulged: but his flourishes (wherefore, it would be too curious to inquire) almost always shaped themselves into a visionary corkscrew never made to draw."

So Lamb himself, writing to Miss Hutchinson (i. 308): "I don't think she [Mary] can make a corkscrew if she tried; which has such a fine effect at the end or middle of an epistle, and fills up. There is a corkscrew—one of the best I ever drew."

These little notes have many such. When he signs "C. L." simply, it is often in the most luxuriant corkscrew manner. But after the rounded accuracy and almost formality of the writing in the body of the note, the flourishing signature strikes the eye like a deacon cutting a caper as he goes out of church.

[This] collection of notes [is] written on all sizes and

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sorts of scraps of paper, generally undated; so that I have been obliged to rely upon the post-mark to determine the precise date, and that is often enough gone. Talfourd says of the letter Lamb wrote to Mr. Gilman, after the funeral of Coleridge (i. 394): "Like most of Lamb's letters, it is undated." These little notes, also, are all folded and directed without envelopes. I am brought very near to him as I look at them. It is like passing him in the Strand, or seeing him look up to a friend from his desk at the India House, and hearing him say with a smile and a stammer, "Good morning!" For almost each one of them has some word or expression which gives the flavour of his genius.

Mr. Allsop's acquaintance with Lamb began, apparently, about the year 1819. Talfourd speaks of him as "one whom Lamb held in the highest esteem, for himself and for his devotion to Coleridge" (i. 402). In his *Recollections of Coleridge*, Allsop says: "The first night I ever spent with Lamb was after a day with Coleridge, when we returned by the same stage; and, from something I had said or done of an unusual kind, I was asked to pass the night with him and his sister. Thus commenced an intimacy which never knew an hour's interruption to the day of his death."

A few months before, Lamb had removed from No. 4 Inner Temple Lane, which, with the house he next occupied, was the scene of the famous Wednesday evenings, of which Talfourd has given so delightful a description—of the little suppers, with which no feasts of famous men any where, or at any time, are to be compared.

From Temple Lane, Lamb [went] to Russell Street, Covent Garden. "Here we are," says Mary Lamb, writing to Miss Wordsworth, "living at a brazier's shop,

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No. 20 in Russell Street, Covent Garden; a place all alive with noise and bustle." It was about this time, also, in the year 1820, that Lamb began the *Essays of Elia* in the *London Magazine*, in that society of wits and genius which makes that period of that magazine so unique and brilliant in English literary history. He made now, also, the acquaintance of Barry Cornwall and Macready; so that these little notes cover the most famous period of his life.

The earliest date that I find is November, 1819:

"DEAR SIR,

"Many thanks for your offer. I have desired the youth to wait upon you, if you will give him leave, that he may give his own answer to your kind proposal of trying to find something for him. My sister begs you will accept her thanks with mine. We shall be at home at all times, most happy to see you when you are in town. We are mostly to be found in an evening.

"Your obliged,

"C. LAMB.

"Saturday, Nov. 29, 1819."

Some kind friend had evidently told Allsop of Lamb's doctrine of presents; which he himself lays down in a letter to Wordsworth (i. 208): "There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these presents, be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or what not. Books are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance, methinks, is too confined and strait-laced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend. Why should

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he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and through all creation."

Who does not envy Mr. Thomas Allsop his sending hares and pheasants to such a recipient, and his getting these sparkling autographs in return?

"DEAR SIR,

"We are most sorry to have missed you twice. We are at home to-night, to-morrow, & Thursday, & should be happy to see you any of these nights. Thanks for the shining bird.

"Yours truly,

"C. L."

"DEAR SIR,

"The hairs of our head are numbered, but those which emanate from your heart defy arithmetic. I would send longer thanks, but your young man is blowing his fingers in the Passage.

"Yours gratefully,

"C. L."

"DEAR SIR,

"Your hare arrived in excellent order Last night, and I hope will prove the precursor of yourself on Sunday.

"Why you should think it necessary to appease us with so many pleasant presents, I know not.

"More acknowlegements when we meet; we dine at 3.

"Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"Thursday."

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"MY DEAR SIR,

"We shall hope to see you to-morrow evening to a rubber. Thanks for your very kind letter, and intentions respecting a bird.

"Yours very truly,

"C. LAMB.

"Tuesday."

"DEAR SIR,

"We expected you here to-night; but as you have invited us to morrow evening, we shall dispose of this evening as we intended to have done of to-morrow. We shall be with you by 8, and shall have taken Tea.

"Your (not obliging but oblidged)

"C. & M. LAMB.

"Monday, 10th."

"DEAR SIR,

"I have brought you Rosamund Bp. of Landaff's daughter's novel. We shall have a small party, on Thursday evening, if you will do us the favour to join it.

"Yours truly,

"C. LAMB.

"Tuesday evening, 15 Feb., 1820."

"DEAR SIR,

"We expect Wordsworth to-morrow evening. Will you look in?

"C. L.

"Russell House, Thursday."

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"DEAR SIR,

"Wordsworth is with us this Even. Can you come? We leave Cov. Gard. on Thursday for some time.

"C. L."

Talfourd describes Lamb's introducing him to Wordsworth two or three years before this. They were neighbours in the Temple.

Still [in] 1820 [he writes]:

"DEAR SIR,

"We have arranged to be into the country Saturday & Sunday, having made an engagement to that effect. Pray let us see you on Thursday at Russell House.

"With regrets & all proper feelings,

"Yours truly,

"C. L."

"DEAR SIR,

"You shall see us on Thursday, with M[artin] B[urney], if possible, about 8. We shall have Teaed.

"Yours truly,

"C. L.

"M. B.'s direction is 26 James Street, Westminster —James, not St. James, Street."

In the year 1821-2, Lamb, who was overwhelmed by visitors (many of whom he loved too dearly to refuse either themselves or the consequences of their coming), and by the deaths of several friends,—among the rest, the father of M. B. ("There's Captain Burney gone! What fun has whist now?"),—took lodgings at Dalston,

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near London, whither, Talfourd tells us, he retired, whenever he wished for repose.

"My dear Sir,

"If you can come next Sunday we shall be equally glad to see you, but do not trust to any of Martin's appointments, except on business, in future. He is notoriously faithless in that point, and we did wrong not to have warned you. Leg of Lamb, as before, hot at 4. And the heart of Lamb ever.

Yours truly,

"C. L.

"30th March, 1821."

"Dear Sir,

"Thanks for the Birds and your kindness. It was but yesterday I was contriving with Talfourd to meet you ½ way at his chamber. But night don't do so well at present. I shall want to be home at Dalston by Eight.

"I will pay an afternoon visit to you when you please. I dine at a chop-house at one always, but I can spend an hour with you after that. Would Saturday serve?

"Yours truly,

"C. L."

Ecce iterum:

"Dear Sir,

"I fear I was obscure. I was plaguily busy when those tempting birds came. I meant to say I could not come this evening; but any other, if I can know a day before, I can come for 2 or 3 afternoon hours, from

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In August, 1823, Lamb hired "a neat cottage at Islington," in which he was for the first time a householder.

September 6, 1823, he writes:

"DEAR ALLSOP,

"I am snugly seated at the cottage. Mary is well, but weak, and comes home on Monday; she will soon be strong enough to see her friends here. In the mean time, will you dine with me at ½ past four to-morrow? Ayrton and Mr. Burney are coming.

"Colebrook Cottage, left hand side, end of Colebrook Row, on the western brink of the New River, a detach'd whitish house.

"No answer is required, but come if you can.

"C. LAMB.

"Saturday, 6 Sept.

"I called on you on Sunday. Respects to Mrs. A. & boy."

The following "letterets," as Lamb called such performances, have various dates in the autumn of 1823:

"MY DEAR ALLSOP,

"I thank you for thinking of my recreation. But I am best here—I feel I am; I have tried town lately, but came back worse. Here I must wait till my loneliness has its natural cure. Besides that, though I am not very sanguine, yet I live in hopes of better news from Fulham, and cannot be out of the way. 'Tis ten weeks to-morrow.—I saw Mary a week since; she was in excellent bodily health, but otherwise far from well.

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But a week or so may give a turn. Love to Mrs. A. & children, and fair weather accompany you.

"C. L.

"Tuesday."

In the next one, how fondly he links his initials with Mary's, whose heart was still "obscured"!

"DEAR A.,

"Your Cheese is the best I ever tasted; Mary will tell you so hereafter. She is at home, but has disappointed me. She has gone back rather than improved. However, she has sense enough to value the present; for she is greatly fond of Stilton. Yours is the delicatest, rain-bow-hued, melting piece I ever flavoured. Believe me, I took it the more kindly, following so great a kindness.

"Depend upon't, yours shall be one of the first houses we shall present ourselves at, when we have got our Bill of Health.

"Being both yours and Mrs. Allsop's truly,

"C. L. & M. L."

"DEAR SIR,

"Will Mrs. A. & you dine with us to-morrow at ½ past 3? Do not think of troubling yourself to send (if you cannot come), as we shall provide only a goose (which is in the House), and your not coming will make no difference in our arrangements.

"Your obliged

"C. LAMB.

"Saturday, 4 October."

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"My Sister's illness is the most obstinate she ever had. It will not go away, and I am afraid Miss James will not be able to stay above a day or two longer. I am desperate to think of it sometimes.

"'Tis eleven weeks!

"The day is sad as my prospects.

"With kindest love to Mrs. A. and the Children.

"Yours,

"C. L.

"No Atlas this week. Poor Hone's good boy Alfred has fractured his skull; another son is returned 'dead' from the Navy office; & his Book is going to be given up, not having answered. What a world of troubles this is!"

"DEAR ALLSOP,

"My injunctions about not calling here had solely reference to your being unwell, &c. at home. I am most glad to see you on my own account. I dine at 3 on either Sunday; come then, or earlier or later; only before dinner I generally walk. Your dining here will be quite convenient. I of course have a Joint that day. I owe you for Newspapers, Cobbetts, pheasants, what not?

"Yours Most Obliged,

"C. L.

"P.S. I am so well (except Rheumatism, which forbids my being out on evenings) that I forgot to mention my health in the above. Mary is very poorly yet. Love to Mrs. Allsop."

[December 5, 1825.]

"DEAR A.,

"You will be glad to hear we are at home to Visitors; not too many or noisy. Some fine day

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shortly Mary will surprise Mrs. Allsop. The weather is not seasonable for formal engagements.

"Yours most ever,

"C. LAMB.

"Saturday."

"DEAR ALLSOP,

"Mary will take her chance of an early lunch or dinner with you on Thursday: She can't come on Wednesday. If I can, I will fetch her home. But I am near killed with Christmasing; and, if incompetent, your kindness will excuse me. I can scarce set foot to ground for a cramp that I took me last night.

"Yours,

"C. LAMB.

"Tuesday."

"DEAR ALLSOP,

"I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a draft on Messrs. Wms. for 81. 11. 3. which I haste to cash in the present alarming state of the money market. Hurst and Robinson gone. I have imagined a Chorus of ill-used Authors singing on the Occasion:

"What should we when Booksellers break?
We should rejoice.

*Da capo.*

"We regret exceedingly Mrs. Allsop's being unwell. Mary or both will come and see her soon. The frost is cruel, and we have both colds. I take Pills again, which battle with your Wine; and Victory hovers doubtful. By the by, tho' not disinclined to presents, I remember

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